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WORLD SOCCER

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PHIL PARKES Q.P.R.

World SOCCER

ARGENTINA-WORLD CUP GO-AHEAD!

Special Report by Keir Radnedge

AS I walked out of the Munich Olympic stadium two and a half years ago, at the end of the 1974 World Cup, I was handed a colour brochure illustrating the delights of Argentina.

There were pictures of Buenos Aires, pictures of theatres, night clubs — even a picture of a sports stadium. As for football — the brochure, after all, was entitled "Argentina '78" — nothing.

It all added up to what seemed to me then a fairly bleak future for the World Cup, and confirmed what I felt in writing an article at the time explaining why West Germany could have seen the last World Cup Finals as we know them.

The basis for my thinking then — and I take no pleasure in finding more and more echoes appearing in other publications as time goes on — was that FIFA's one-country-one-vote system could split the organisation and plunge soccer into world-wide chaos.

But at no time have I taken the popular line — despite the reports of one thousand political assassinations last year — that terrorism in Argentina was the real threat to the competition. I suspect too many people in too many high places have used this as an excuse in the power struggle inside FIFA.

Be that as it may, Argentina have had their problems. FIFA president Joao Havelange has always been a confident public exponent of Argentina '78, but even he must have been privately worried in 1975 at the total lack of progress with the development of stadia, hotels and press and tourist facilities.

Then, in March 1976, came the army takeover of the government and, despite the recent violent death of the Argentinian organising committee president, Omar Actis, preparations are suddenly racing ahead. This was the welcome conclusion of the FIFA delegation visiting Argentina at the end of November.

Their visit was planned around a match between Argentina and Russia in the River Plate stadium which will host the 1978 Final. The match itself was a big flop. That wasn't really important. What did matter was that there were no embarrassing terrorist activities, no organisational mix-ups and Havelange, at the end of it all, could say once more: "I was never in any doubt that Argentina have the ability to organise the World Cup successfully. This match was just a foretaste."

Hopefully he was not speaking for the standard of play in the 1978 Finals.

The teams were:

Argentina: Gatti — Tarantani, Olguin, Killer, Carrascosa — Ardiles, Gallego, Valencia (Bochini) — Houseman, Saldano (Rocha), Bertoni.

Russia: Gontar — Truglov, Olshansky, Hinchigavchili, Parov — Suchilin (Berezhndi) Mochaidze, Dolmatov — Chesnokov, Tarjanov, Petrosian.

One glance at the Russian team is enough to see that it was no more than a B side. But though they played tight in defence, they also came

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FRONT COVER PICTURE:
Action from the recent World Cup match between Italy and England.

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nearest to winning the game when Ararat Erevan's Nazar Petrosian put the ball in the net after 35 minutes.

Referee Jose Favelle Neto from Sao Paulo, Brazil, first allowed the goal then, seeing his linesman flagging for offside, changed his mind.

The Argentine fans jeered their team off the pitch at half-time, and that encouraged them to be a little more enterprising in the second half. The best chance, however, after 56 minutes, was wasted when Rene Houseman put a good chance well wide. Another shot was cleared off the Russian goal-line, but neither side deserved to win.

Argentina had beaten Russia 1-0 in Kiev in March but even *there* the stadium wasn't isolated in the charge of more than 2,000 federal and military policemen.

That wasn't the only big show of strength put on for the visitors' benefit. In the Sheraton Hotel in Buenos Aires, TV monitors operating off hidden cameras, and a host of armed security men, kept permanent watch.

World wide

Security costs for the World Cup itself have been estimated at £70,000. Taking into account world-wide inflation and the continuing fall therefore in the value of the peso, one can only guess at a figure something near £100,000 by the summer of 1978.

On the financial side, two recent decisions announced during the visit, have been vital in convincing FIFA to stay true to Argentina.

The first was the comment from the European Broadcasting Union that television colour transmission facilities will be more than adequate. That ensures the television income which means so much to the viability of the tournament.

Then, the government have promised to underwrite the ticket sales, so that even if ticket prices (set in dollars to try to combat inflation) are too high for local fans to attend but the major (i.e. Argentina) matches, the losses will be made up to FIFA.

That's a brave guarantee.

In 1975 the Argentinian FA sent out a Press release saying that "perfectly knowing the essential role of the Press, (the Argentine leaders) would like to name the competition as the 'World Cup of the Press'."

That was nice to know. I'll be interested to find out what that exactly means when it comes to practicalities in the World Cup centres at Mar del Plata, Rosario, Cordoba, Mendoza and of course Buenos Aires.

The main stadium will be the River Plate ground in the Nunez suburb, one of the more classy in Buenos Aires. The stadium was commissioned in 1938 and capacity is now officially 72,000. Plans are well in hand for a further stand which will increase capacity to 95,000. Work begins shortly, with the stadium due to be closed for a period.

There will also be extensive development at the Rosario Central stadium on the banks of the

• Security
• Broadca
• Ticket s

Mastrangelo (left), scorer of many vital late goals for Boca Juniors, alone in front of the Quilmes goal. But this time he missed and Boca lost 1-0 in the Argentine national championship.

River Parana in Rosario. Capacity is now 50,906 and the idea is to boost that to 71,895.

But completely new stadia are being built at Cordoba (62,850 capacity) and Mendoza (50,000).

That's all very well, but there are huge distances between venues which will complicate the practical running of the tournament where communications are not as straightforward as in, say, West Germany. Mendoza, for instance, on the western fringe of Argentina, is 650 miles from Buenos Aires, yet only 200 from Santiago, capital of Chile! This city, up towards the Andes, is apparently the likeliest group centre for England, should they surprise everyone now and reach the Finals.

Security cover

Not that England would be the most popular of teams, of course. Sir Alf Ramsay's "animals" taunt still rankles. England might need a security cover special even by Argentina's standards.

For the fact remains that any event such as the World Cup or the Olympic Games provides an ideal stage for any cranky political extremist, and I see no sense in attacking the Argentinians for committing themselves to making the 1978 World Cup the most security-conscious sports event of all time.

7 costs...£70,000
sting facilities OK
sales under-written

That will of course mean conflict in the coming months with FIFA. For what the organising committee want for the sake of football, the Argentinians may veto for the sake of safety. For the government realise, more fully than their Peron predecessors, what a tremendous opportunity the World Cup provides to help establish international credibility.

A successful, peaceful World Cup would help persuade the outside world that Argentina is once more worth investment.

Not that European football clubs aren't often investing in Argentina. For example, there are now 55 Argentinians playing in Spain, and Italy was once (and probably soon will be again) a massive employer.

Brilliant victory

That goes back a long time, of course. Luisito Monti and Raimundo Orsi were key members of the Italian 1934 World Cup-winning team. Much later Argentina's 1958 World Cup aspirations were ruined when in 1957, after a brilliant victory in the South American championship, their star inside forwards — Humberto Maschio, Antonio Angelillo and Omar Sivori — were all swept away.

Poor Argentina — always the victims, as in 1950, when Colombia's professional clubs set themselves up outside FIFA and poached greats such as Alfredo di Stefano, Adolfo Pedernera, Hector Rial, Nestor Rossi, goalkeeper Julio Cozzi and many more.

During a visit to Europe last summer for the European Championship finals, Argentina team manager Cesar Luis Menotti made the point that in the past 30 years, Europe has robbed Argentina of no fewer than 15 complete national teams.

That's staggering — not just in figures, but the realisation of what Argentina might have been able to achieve in football terms had the country's economy been able to support clubs rich enough to hang onto their stars!

Menotti has now obtained an order forbidding his World Cup prospects from playing abroad. But he has lost valuable men already. Norberto Alonso, the River Plate midfielder now with Marseille, and Mario Kempes, the Rosario top scorer now with Valencia, slipped away last summer just before the barriers came down.

Menotti has ruled them out of his World Cup calculations.

For the last World Cup his predecessor, Vladislao Cap, brought an incomplete squad to Europe, then grafted in Athletico Madrid's Ramon Heredia and Ruben Ayala, as well as Hector Yazalde, then with Sporting Lisbon.

But Menotti, the tall aristocratic coach who did so much with Newells Old Boys and then Huracan, recognises the dangers in that approach.

"Who is to say their Spanish clubs would let me have Ayala and Kempes? And how could I even play them in the Finals if they have not been part of the squad, playing in the build-up matches first?"

Menotti doesn't blame players going abroad to try to make their fortunes — after all, he went to play in Brazil before a knee injury ended his career. Now he demands loyalty above all from the players he retains and hopes for the chance to put them to work in as many internationals as he can fit in before the World Cup Finals.

The problem is that Menotti, determined though he is, must be diplomatic too, so as not to cross the big clubs whose players he needs.

Early summer

Boca Juniors, for example, are already looking ahead to the Taça dos Libertadores, the South American club championship, which gets under way in early summer. That is when Menotti is also hoping to get an international programme under way.

According to a fixture list recently published, Argentina's first matches in 1977 are between March 24 and 26, when they go to Spain to play as top attraction in Real Madrid's 75th birthday celebrations.

After that the first fixture of 1977 in Argentina itself is set for June 5, against world champions West Germany, with England turning up on June 12. A month later, the visitors are East Germany.

It's hard to believe that Menotti will be happy with that meagre list, and no doubt he'll hope to fill out with matches against South American opposition, preferably before the Libertadores gets under way.

Good luck to him, and good luck to Argentina. Though I still remain pessimistic about the future of the World Cup movement, that doesn't stop me hoping fervently that Argentina '78 is a massive success.

BRIAN GLANVILLE looks back over England's poor display in Rome

ITALY LOOK TO IMPROVE

IT IS rather a sobering thought that while England and Don Revie look desperately for a team good enough to beat the Italians at Wembley next year, Italy themselves are determined to renew the midfield which played against England in Rome. Romeo Benetti, Giancarlo Antognoni and Fabio Capello have been described as too old fashioned. When I spoke to the Italian team manager, Enzo Bearzot, immediately after the game and was somewhat unenthusiastic about the display of Capello, he replied that for all this, when Capello wasn't playing his absence was felt; he brought order and discipline into the team.

There is a strong feeling among the critics, however, that Capello, Antognoni and Benetti just won't do, Capello and Benetti because they are now too old to get through the work required of midfield men, Antognoni because in 18 matches — the game in Lisbon against Portugal on December 22 would thus be his nineteenth — he has never really been convincing. What these critics want to see is a more modern midfield, composed of players with the energy and versatility to put themselves about both in attack and defence, rather than to play a cautious, static game.

For such theorists as these, the regista, the scheme, as such is a luxury who should no longer exist. Instead, the task should be divided among everybody. I suppose in an ideal team, in an ideal world of total football, this might be possible, but I always tend to look back with some amusement to the World Cup of 1974 when one of the finest players of all was that slow, old fashioned schemer, Wim Van Hanegem, who was just about the best Dutch player on the field in the World Cup Final.

The theories of Total Football can, beyond question, be taken too far, there will always be a place for the Van Hanegems of the game, if and when you are lucky enough to find them, but it is true that midfield was the weakest sector of the Italian team against England in Rome, with Antognoni, though he did score that vital deflected goal, giving some very poor passes — there was one occasion when mere accuracy, in a second half breakaway, must surely have brought a goal — and having some very feeble shots, while Benetti was largely overpowered by Brooking, and Capello was a somewhat static figure.

Don Revie, at a Press Conference, before England's match against Italy.

Broken leg

In the place of these three, these protestants would like to see such players as the Torino trio, Patrizio Sala, who made a very good debut this season against Yugoslavia in Rome, Claudio Sala, his elder brother, and Zaccarelli, a substitute against England, not to mention a further Torino star, Pecci, who is at the moment recovering from a broken leg. There is also a large body of support for Gaetano Scirea, the Juventus sweeper, to take over from the 34 year old Giacinto Facchetti, who was in no trouble at all against England, alas, but is hardly a sweeper in the modern manner.

There was nothing very modern at all about England in Rome, and it is difficult to be very confident that they will be much more modern in a year's time when, on November 16, they have to play Italy at Wembley. Revie's half hearted and half baked attempt to get them to play man to man marking with a sweeper was abandoned after one ill starred attempt against Eire at Wembley.

Although for a variety of reasons I do not

Bettega scores Italy's second goal against England in Rome.

think Revie can be given heavy blame for the defeat in Rome. I do not think he helps matters with his nervous and ill judged fumbling around with the tactics of the team, so that only in Rome did it play its traditional and familiar 4-3-3.

If he really wanted to play tight markers with a sweeper, an ambition difficult to fulfill, above all when you do not have the team at your disposal for more than a few days at a time — given that zonal marking is what English defenders are used to from boyhood, then there was something of a case to be made out for it. The way that Franco Causio won the game for Italy in Rome gave substance to Revie's argument that only by very rigorous close marking could England hope to eliminate the menace of Italy's very gifted strikers. On at least three occasions, Causio escaped Mills, twice goals came as a result; once Causio shot furiously, just over the bar.

It is probably true to say, as some Italians did, that England would have been better off with a traditional, block busting centre-forward, strong in the air, a good point of reference for Keegan and Channon, both so disappointing, to play off; but where at that moment was such a player to be found? Had Channon, Bowles and Keegan played together in the two previous internationals, under the same stategy, it is possible that they might by then have found a common language, but in all the circumstances, it was simply too much to ask.

It is customary now, especially among our coaches, that strange and unpredictable body of men — a First Division coach recently told me with great vehemence that he would never have Trevor Brooking in *his* team; less than two weeks after Brooking's admirable performance in Rome — to say that football today is unrecognisably better than it was in the dear old primitive days of, shall we say, the Matthews Final of 1953; that players are immeasurably fitter and more aware, tactically.

I think I would accept that were we talking of football in Holland, West Germany, Czechoslovakia. But in England we just don't produce players capable of asserting themselves in international football. The best left-back we could find in Rome was a moderate, right footed player who'd been cut to pieces by Dzajic in his first international, years ago. When a couple of centre forwards dropped out, there was no one to replace them; any more than we could find an inside-forward to replace Gerry Francis in midfield.

There are gleams of light, such as the success in Europe of Queens Park Rangers, but by and large, Stolidity Rules; OK? No; not at all OK.

Misconception

But to abandon those methods, with only one match between his team and Rome, to play an old fashioned and clumsily conceived 4-2-4 for the match against Finland was a piece of wilful folly. That the tactics manifestly didn't work, that England played appallingly badly precisely because of their misconception, would be condemnation enough in itself; but over and above that, their employment meant that England would go to Rome with yet a third tactical formation.

The problem was made the more severe by the loss of Gerry Francis and Paul Madeley through injury, the exposure of Todd and Beattie's inadequacy as full-backs, rather than as players, against the Finns, the sad and sudden loss of form of Pearson and Joe Royle, as evidenced in the two Manchester clubs' games against Juventus. In the circumstances, it was bold of Revie — or desperate, if you prefer a more jaundiced attitude — to choose Stanley Bowles for the match in Rome, but it inevitably meant the greatest of gambles: not merely on whether the wayward Bowles would play a satisfactory game, but on whether so different, definite and original a player could be integrated into that team within a single game.

The answer was, inevitably, that of course he couldn't; it would have been quite unreasonable to expect otherwise. As Eartha Kitt says, an Englishman needs time, and never more so than when, in an international team, he has to assimilate an unorthodox player.

Giacinto Facchetti with the injured Brian Greenhoff.

News from Scandinavia . . . compiled by Eric Batty

Norwegian title won by Lillestrom

SMALL TOWN team Lillestrom are the new champions of Norway, two years after being promoted. In 1974 — their key player, inside left Tom Lund who wears spectacles and is a successful businessman off the field, earned a double by spearheading his clubs promotion drive and earning the title 'Footballer of the Year'. Lillestrom in Lund's time have come up from Division III — which in Norway really means obscurity — and he could have left years ago to make a fortune with Ajax.

Brann (Bergen) will be in Europe again next season having won the Cup, beating Second Division Sondal 2-1 in the final.

An old well known club comes up out of Division II, Valerengen, no strangers to the European Cup. They come up with Bodoe Glint and FK Moss. But down go equally famous Stronsgodset, double winners not long ago together with Fredrikstad another famous name, and Vard.

Prowess

One of Sweden's top players of the moment is inside forward Anders Linderoth of Osters whose prowess was underlined when he was awarded the 'Golden Ball' — Sweden's Footballer of the Year. Linderoth, 26 year old, regretfully seems certain to follow Ralf Edstrom and Roland Sandberg and become a professional in West Germany, much to the disgust of international team boss Georg Ericsson who said recently: "None of our players has improved as a result of playing in professional football."

Another player who could turn pro, with clubs from Holland and West Germany after him is Thomas Sjoberg who scored twice in the recent 6-0 assassination of Finland, the star of a Swedish team that included only home based players.

Top scorer was Rutger Backe of Hamlstad, who scored 20 goals while Atvididaberg FF, champions in 1970 and 1971 and a club that produced many fine players, have been relegated along with Orgryte of Gothenburg.

Dropping zone

As Orgryte go down — Elfsborg of Boras having pulled away from the dropping zone in the second half of the campaign — IFK Gateborg come up. Always the best supported of the Gothenburg clubs, IFK were the only side last season to pull in a 50,000 crowd for a league match — in Division II. They have Ove Kindvall and current international sweeper Bjorn Nordquist, the former PSV Eindhoven professional.

Now 34, Nordquist has a Swedish record 96 caps, already two up on the old record held by 1970 World Cup boss Orvar Bergmark who played right back in the 1958 final. On current form, Nordquist seems likely to become the first Swedish player to reach 100 caps and said recently, he feels he is playing well within himself and could go on to reach 105 — an all Scandinavian record.

In the Swedish Cup, Malmo, Osters, relegated Elfsborg and promoted Derby (who were in Divison II this season) have reached the semi-finals. There was a strong movement within the FA to go on playing into November but this was finally rejected and the semi-finals and final will be staged in the spring.

Good year for Nielsen

NEW NATIONAL team boss Kurt Nielsen had a good year, gaining Denmark's first away win over Sweden for 39 years, starting the Danes' World Cup campaign with a side that included foreign based professionals for the first time and suffering his first set-back only in the last game, a vital World Cup tie away to Portugal in Lisbon that got out of hand and became a kicking match.

On the home front, the championship was not decided until the last day when KB, Frem and B.1903 were all in with a chance. Frem who led before the final hurdle, dropped a vital point 0-0 away to Naestvad and allowed B.1903 to move up and take the title with a 2-0 away win over Vejle BK. KB of Copenhagen stayed in third place though they beat Esbjerg 2-1 at home, their only chance on the last day was that both teams above them should lose.

Former Feyenoord left winger star Jorgen Kristensen returned home to join 1975 champions Koge BK but they had an indifferent time, drawing 12 of their 30 league matches and finishing well down in ninth place.

With the top three clubs all playing in Copenhagen — there were seven teams from the capital in the 16 club First Division last season though two of them, Fremad and Vanlose have been relegated, attendance inevitably continue to be poor and as usual the expected exodus of the best players is being gloomily predicted. The best that Danish football can hope for it seems is that all her emigres will be made available for international matches.

KUOPION WIN IN FINLAND

KUOPION PALLOSEURA, know as KuPs (pronounced Koops) are the new champions of Finland, three points ahead of the biggest club in the country, HJK Helsinki, whose manager, Aulis Rytkonen, doubles as national team boss. KuP's neighbours, newly promoted Kupion Pallotoverit, have been relegated along with GBK Kokkola, and for Kuopion PT's last home game only 356 paid for admission. That was the lowest gate of the day but even the highest was not good — 3,446 saw HJK (Helsingin Jalkapalloklubi).

Top scorer in the First Division was Matti Paatelainen from runners up Valkeakosken Haka, the man who headed the goal against England in Helsinki. The Finn's Wembley hero Jyrki Nieminen shared second place with his 12 for HJK. The other on 12 being Hannu Lamberg of KPV and Markku Ritola of MP Mikkelin.

MALMO FF PIPPED...

REIGNING SWEDISH champions Malmo FF were pipped for the title by IFK Halmstad, after Malmo had recovered from a poor start in which they drew or lost the bulk of their opening games.

Managed, by Englishman Bob Houghton and with one of Sweden's best ever players, Bo Larsson, out on the park, Malmo recovered and moved into top place in the second half of the programme.

Perhaps Malmo's European Cup commitments took the edge off their performances but at all events they were finally forced into second place. Giving the affair an extra twist, Halmstad had an indifferent campaign in 1975, looking at times like a team booked for Division II and Bob Houghton stepped in the recomend a fellow Englishman to be their manager-coach. As a result Roy Hodgson took over Hamstad . . . and robbed Houghton and Malmo of their title.

Swedish fans appear to be divided on their opinions of Malmo and Halmstad. Their fans say they like their English-style play but their critics prefer Osters IF from Vaxjo, who play a better brand of open, dynamic play based on attack.

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STOCKPORT, ENGLAND

News from Switzerland ... by ARTHUR ROTMIL

Transfer system affected by court ruling

SWISS FOOTBALL has been rocked to its foundations by the so-called "Perroud-Affair", which will have far reaching consequences for the future and the entire structure of the game in that country.

In effect, a Federal Court of Law has just ruled that clubs have no right to retain players against their wish after their contract has expired. This system, based on the English concept of "retain-and-transfer", which has been one of the fundamental principles of engaging players, has not been declared illegal. There is incidentally no right of appeal against this verdict.

What did actually happen? George Perroud, a former international defender who plays for Servette of Geneva, received notice back in 1972, that the club no longer required his services. But at the same time the management refused to release him to another club, instead Perroud was, as a form of punishment, internally suspended!

The player appealed to a civil court which adjudged the club's action as "contrary to accepted arrangements between employer and employees." This court awarded Perroud the sum of equivalent to £6,000 as compensation for loss of earnings, plus, £1,000 in lieu of "moral suffering." In addition, the court rules that the player was right to take legal proceedings against the club. And now the Federal Court has publicly acknowledged that the transfer regulations, as fixed by the Swiss Football Federation, are illegal.

Players should be able to leave their clubs at the cessation of their contractual agreement, just like workers in any other industry. No club will, as from now, have the right to suspend a player whom they do not want to use. Thus the old rule under which a transfer could only be settled by three signatures — of the old club, the player's and his new club, can no longer be enforced.

Not surprisingly this judicial verdict has caused consternation in Swiss football circles. A series of high level meetings are now being arranged to prepare for the new laws which undoubtedly will free the players from the "slave labour" tag. Astonishingly though, there is no Players' Union in that country — only now they're talking of forming an "association".

But since no players are being transferred in mid-season, it may well be next year (1977), before the Swiss Football Federation officials come up with a new solution and new regulations. A three-man committee, consisting of law experts, is being appointed to examine all the implications arising from the court's "historic" decision.

Aussie's record...

A record of won four, drew three, lost four is a just reflection of the mixed success of the Australian national squad's tour of Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, China, Israel, West Germany, Holland and England. The Socceroos emerged undefeated from six matches against Asian opposition, but performances were generally unimpressive, as in the one all draw against Indonesia.

More promising were the 5-4 victory against China in Peking and a hardfought draw against Israel. Five matches against European opposition further demonstrated that the Aussies have a long way to go in world soccer. Even more humiliating than the defeats against Birmingham, Sunderland, SV Hamburg and PSV Eindhoven was the touring side's failure to beat West German second division side, KSV Baunatal.

Coach Jim Shoulder has learnt a lot about his players from the tour, the most consistent defenders being Gary Byrne, Peter Wilson, Col. Bennett, Jim Rooney and goalkeeper, Todd Clarke. Strikers Abonyi, Ollerton and Kosmina between them scored 11 out of a total of 15 goals. These eight players will provide the core of a side that should have little difficulty eliminating New Zealand and Taiwan from the World Cup, but which could well come unstuck against opposition of the calibre of Israel.

ZURICH RUN IS HALTED

In the championship the long unbeaten run of title holders FC Zürich came to an abrupt end. Their first defeat of the season to Neuchatel Xamax brought also to a close a marvellous run of 35 games stretching back to August 1975, when they last lost to . . . Xamax!

But Zürich, with the strongest reserve squad, remain everybody's favourites to retain their crown, even with the changed formula in the championship which will see a play-off in a final pool between the top six clubs.

Zürich have also reached the quarter-finals of the European Champions Cup in which they are outsiders, but having put out Glasgow Rangers now feel that on their day they can upset anybody. Goalkeeper Karl Grob, regarded by many as the best in the country, celebrated his 150 consecutive League match for Zürich — a record for a still active player.

Zürich's setback in the League allowed Servette to take over the leadership. Despite the indifferent form shown by the former Spurs centre forward Martin Chivers the club management are persevering with the costly Englishman though it is doubtful whether they will offer him an extension of contract. Chivers has not been scoring as freely as was expected and most of Servette's goals have come from the midfield men Andrey and Barberis.

It is no secret that Servette's coach the exiled Hungarian Peter Pazmandy is considering "resting" Chivers in the hope that this will motivate the "sleeping giant" to more effort. Perhaps the three-month winter break will do him good; he intends to train in London with Tottenham.

By contrast, another veteran the famous German Günter Netzer has now adapted to the conditions and to the playing rhythm of Swiss football. The former international schemer has been improving steadily, he is physically fitter and is now the midfield general at Grasshoppers that the fans had hoped he would turn out to be.

Great interest was aroused by Netzer's answers to hundreds of questions sent in by the readers of Switzerland's largest sports paper *Sport* of Zurich and reproduced on a two-page spread. Among the choice questions was this one: "Who was the roughest opponent you have ever faced?" to which Netzer replied: "I once played against Nobby Stiles . . ."

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SAINT ETIENNE THROUGH AGAIN

THINGS AT the moment, if you will permit me to say so, look pretty good for French football. Eire beaten 2-0 in Paris, giving France three points out of four so far in the World Cup qualifying tournament, Saint Etienne, conquerors of PSV Eindhoven for the second time in consecutive seasons, once again through to the quarter-finals of the European Cup which they so nearly won, last season. Until March, we can rest happily on our laurels, but on March 30, France must play a very difficult match in Dublin, while early in January, Saint Etienne will know whom they must meet in the European Cup. If it were Liverpool, it would be especially interesting!

The trouble is, for Saint Etienne, that they have put so much into the European Cup that they have lost an awful lot of ground in the League, so much in fact that it must be highly doubtful if they can make it all up. I think it is fair to say that such defeats as that at Bordeaux, where two first half goals by Lattuada without reply sank the League Champions, would have been very different if Saint Etienne had not poured forth so many of their moral and physical resources against PSV. Note that even Bayern Munich, season by season, have had to make immense late efforts to win the European Cup in order to stay in it, so far had they slid behind in the League.

Less easily explicable has been the falling away of Nice, who began the season so well and then, not alas for the first time, plunged into a miasma of bad results, scandal and victimisation. It was almost inevitable that their manager, the Yugoslav Markovic, the former international stopper, who had already had rows with Jean-Marc Guillou over how the game should be played, would be made the scapegoat.

Various critics

But the fault, as various critics pointed out, ran a great deal deeper than that. M. Roger Loeuillet, the President, so distressed by the way things were going that he offered to resign and turn the club back to the municipality, alleged that there have been "too many stars". Certainly some of those stars have not always behaved themselves too well; after Nice were knocked out of the UEFA Cup by Espanol of Barcelona, Guillous, Jouve and Douis were fined for getting back too late to their hotel in that city, while more recently, after a useful performance at Saint Etienne, five or six of the team allegedly drove back to Nice and spent the night in night clubs.

Markovic has said that the Nice players want to play an "economical" kind of game which is now out of date. Loeillet alleges that this is all entirely true and he can prove it, that the so called stars haven't the spirit of sacrifice and teamwork necessary for success. He has also said that while Markovic might perhaps be accused of a certain lack of psychology, there is no doubt that he has worked immensely hard, especially with the young players, who were devoted to him. But that Markovic knew which way the wind was blowing was shown by the fact that weeks before the crisis blew up he had apparently written to FIFA offering his services as part of the teams which are now supposed to bring soccer coaching and organisation to the Third World, saying that he knew he would not be spending much more time with Nice.

Surprising things have meanwhile been going on at the top of the table, not least at Bastia, that brave but ill supported little Corsican club, where another Yugoslav, Dragan Dzajic, now in his second season, has been achieving great things.

Dzajic, who with the right flank striker Jacques Zimako has been working wonders this season, surprised everybody when, finally gaining permission to leave Belgrade, he decided to go to Corsica rather than to one of the great clubs of Spain or West Germany. Those who watch him week by week say that never has he played better, that his ball control, shooting power, marvellously accurate centres and commitment are as outstanding as ever.

Add to his excellence and to the brio of Zimako the fine form this season of Felix, a centre-forward who seems to breathe the Corsican air more happily than he does that of Paris or Nimes, and you have learned much about the success of Bastia this season.

What of the international team? It is plain enough that it has, as we hoped, found an ebullient midfield, thanks to those two very young, very lively players, scorers against Eire, Dominique Bathenay and Michel Platini. Both are outstanding goal scorers as well as creators; you may remember Bathenay's thumping shot against the bar in the European Cup Final against Bayern, while had Lacombe whose kick incurred O'Leary's wrath not taken a ball off his left foot at the Parc, he would surely have scored another against the Irish.

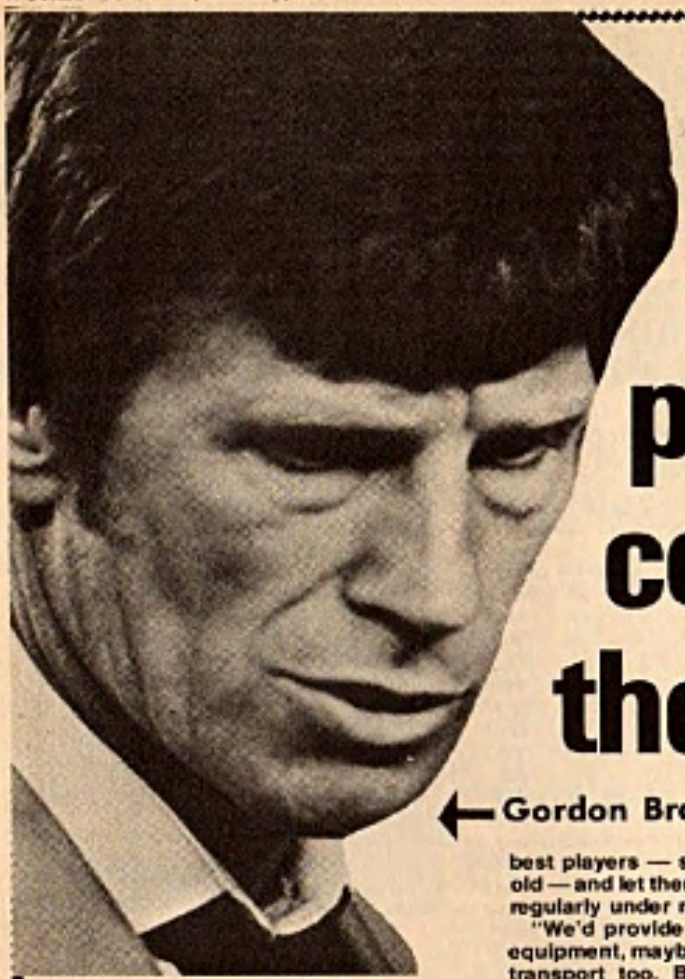
It seems that the quiet man, Michel Hidalgo, kept so far back in the shadows when the effervescent Stefan Kovacs was in charge of the French national team, is going to succeed; that the players are prepared to play for him. Note, too, how bold he can be in his choices, bringing Keruzore, in such fine form this season for Laval, into the midfield, and not hesitating to blood another young hope in Rouyer, who he had brought into the team this season after watching him during the Olympic tournament.

Since the debate about local authority help for soccer clubs has taken wing in England, you may be interested to know that the Lille Municipality has just voted two million francs to the club's development association, which should keep the wolf from the door for a while.

Meanwhile what of Robert Gadocha? About the time you read this, that famous Polish left winger will have decided whether to stay with Nantes — who left him out of the team for weeks this season — or not. Gadocha said it was 50-50 as to whether he'd go.

Dragan Dzajic, pictured playing for Yugoslavia against England.

News from France by Andre Duclos



PAUL GARDNER reports from New York

Special problems of coaching the Cosmos

← Gordon Bradley

COSMOS COACH Gordon Bradley had been back in New York for two days, back from a six-week trip that took in West Germany, France, England and Brazil. "I've been seeing some of the best soccer in the world . . . and some of the worst," he said. The best was in West Germany, the worst, well, I didn't need to ask. We had just finished a lengthy discussion of England's lamentable showing against Italy.

Why all the travelling? "In the USA, nobody coaches the coaches. We're learning, really, from watching our own games, and that's obviously not a broad enough experience. I want to see what's going on around the world. For instance, I was with Bayern-Munich for 10 days, going into concentration with them, attending training sessions, watching games . . . with their first team, their reserves, and looking at the young kids, eight years old and up."

Bradley shakes his head slowly and smiles. "That's what we've got to have here. Those kids are there at the club five days a week after school, for two hours — marvellous facilities, first-class coaching. That's what I would love to do for the Cosmos. Get the local coaches to recommend their best players — say 40 kids, 10 years old — and let them come along to train regularly under my guidance.

"We'd provide all the facilities, the equipment, maybe we'd have to lay on transport too. But I'll tell you this, unless we can start something like that, unless we start playing for nine or 10 months a year, then forget it . . . we are *never* going to compete with Brazil or West Germany or Argentina and the rest of them. Never."

The development of American players continues to be an annoyingly resistant problem for the Cosmos — and indeed for all the North American Soccer League clubs. An increasing amount of time is spent scouting the colleges and the high schools, but the pickings are still absurdly slim.

Scouting

Mention of scouting brings a wry grin to Bradley's face. "That's another reason why I would *love* to be able to field an all American team. Because it would certainly sort out this scouting mess. Look at this (some rummaging of the papers on the desk produces a telegram) from Africa . . . a player we've had so many good reports about. But I've never seen him. What do I do?

"Do I go all the way there? What if I see him and he has a bad game? Then I've got to stay and take another look. I haven't got the time for that. Or we have to fly him over here. And this sort of thing goes on all the time. Not just Africa, but Brazil and Europe, too. In the other countries it's easy, you get players from within your own league, you already know all about them, or if you don't it doesn't take much travelling to find out."

Cosmopolitan, no doubt, is exactly what the Cosmos should be. The name was originally chosen to convey to New Yorkers that their team would transcend ethnic boundaries. It was a splendid idea, it still is a splendid idea, but it is the source of a major Cosmos problem. What exactly should be the style of a cosmopolitan team? How does one get Englishmen and Brazilians and Peruvians and Italians — and Americans, for that matter — to mesh their styles?

I asked Bradley which of the various aspects of coaching he rated his top priority — fitness, skills, organisation, signing of players, psychology, which? "Getting them to play together as a team, getting them to understand each other's play. Like getting Terry Garbett, who's used to the English way, to understand why Ramon Mifflin doesn't chase back on defence. Getting them to appreciate the importance of possession versus long kicks . . . of course, we have Pele, so it's not difficult to make that point."

Supposing it all works out as planned, what does Bradley have in mind as the Cosmos style? "I think the West Germans are playing the sort of football that I want to see. Everyone knows what everyone else is doing, sort of an ESP thing. If there's a breakdown, then they'll all work for the others.

"The Germans have the ability to perform all the skills at high standard, their fitness is at a peak, the mental attitude is right . . . of course, I'm

● *Continued on page 35*

East European review... East European review...

RUCH SLIP DOWN IN POLAND

A RARE struggle is going on for the leadership in the current Polish championship and for once Ruch Chorzow are well out of it. Either they miss former Czech boss Michel Vican who left during the summer after seven years or perhaps too many of the Ruch players have gone over the hill together.

Ruch slipped down to 12th place in the 16 club league when Szombierki Bytom beat them 2-1 at the Slaski stadium. Jan Benigier put Ruch ahead after an hour, but Szombierki drew level and in a furious finish Eugeniusz Nagiel got the winner for the visitors just four minutes from time.

Then, at home to temporary leaders Slask Wroclaw, Ruch cheered the hearts of their supporters somewhat with a 3-1 win from a side that showed several changes. One would have thought this was going to be a goalless draw, until after an our, an own goal put Ruch ahead.

Then with only 20 minutes left Zygmunt Garlowski got an equaliser for Slask who then had only to hang on for ten minutes. It proved too much, however, for in a roaring finish Ruch hit two more goals from Benigier and Krzysztof Kajrys in the last two minutes.

After that Ruch appeared to have regained some of their morale. Having crashed at home to one of the title chasers they were now away to another — champions Stal Mielec. Playing defensively, Ruch held up Lato and Szarmach but in the second half Edward Oratowski came forward from midfield to open the scoring and it looked odds on a home win — until Benigier came along with his fourth goal of the season, with only three minutes left.

Szombierki, Stal Mielec and Slask are still the pacemakers, with GKS Tychy, a surprisingly successful side last season, still in the doldrums. Undoubtedly it would help if international centre forward Roman Ogaza began to pop in goals for GKS once more, but his season his tally so far is only four from 14 league games.

Showing how even the Polish league is at the moment, newly promoted Odra Opole, began the campaign like a house on fire and were in top place after 5 rounds, but they have slipped several times recently. At home to Widzew Lodz Odra led 2-1 after an hour when their new international star Zbigniew Boniek put them 2-1 up with a fine cross shot from a left wing cross. But Antoni Kot produced a pair of late goals to give Odra a 3-2 win away.

After that Odra went through 180 minutes without scoring a single goal. At home to glamour club Gornik Zabrze, now down on their luck, Odra were beaten 2-0 by a goal in each half. Gornik's veteran international Zygfryd Szoltys got the first, and newcomer Janusz Wasilewski, signed during the summer from neighbouring Gliwice got the second. Then Odra went to Stettin and crashed again to an early goal by Leszek Wolksi to which they had no reply.

Stal Mielec are still finding it difficult to hit their championship form though there is no doubt they have the talent to take the title if they do. At home to Wisla Krakow, Andrzej Szarmach got the only goal in a 1-0 win but the following week Stal crashed 0-2 away to Szombierki in Bytom.

Then they were held at home in the 1-1 draw against Ruch and only just managed to beat Stal Rzeszow, relegated to Division II last summer in the Cup. That puts them through to the quarter finals along with Zaglebie, LKS Lodz, Legia (who beat Gornik Zabrze away with a single goal from Wladyslaw Dabrowski) Polonia Bytom . . . who put out Division I leaders LKS Lodz by 3-1 and Wisla Krakow who struggled to survive against Third Division Olimpia Elblag and only just managed it with a goal in extra time.

Two Cup games remain unplayed: Division III Orzel Lodz v. Lech Poznan and GKS Tychy v. Szombierki.

Legia Warsaw are also struggling to retain their reputation, though they beat Zaglebie Sosnowiecz well enough, by 3-0, before a 15,000 crowd in their last league game. All the goals came in the second half, with Tadeusz Nowak scoring twice and Dubrowski getting the other.

Despite their insignificant league position, Legia had gone close to taking a point off the leaders LKS Lodz a week earlier. Lodz set off at a cracking pace to lead 2-0, but Legia came back into the game, scored, and drew level when Leslaw Cmikiewicz got his first goal of the season in the 70th minute. But LKS, who have no recognised top marksman were not finished and along came right back Jan Marchewka to get what proved to be the winner at 3-2, just a minute later.

Legia's in and out form can be explained somewhat by the varying performances of their midfield general Kazimierz Deyna, but the almost complete collapse of Wisla Krakow is a much greater mystery. For the last two years they have been very promising, getting half their side a cap or two and at times, scoring freely.

This season, however, they have been short of goals and recently failed to get one at Mielec, went down 0-1 at home to Widzew Lodz a week later (Zbigniew Boniek being the hero) and last time out won by the 'minimum' away to Gronik where Kazimierz Kmiecik, capped last season for getting goals, scored for only the third time this season.

Top scorers at the moment are Tadeusz Nowak (Legia Warsaw) and Leszek Wolski (Pogon) with 8 apiece.

TELEVISION HIT

PREPARATIONS FOR the World Cup qualifying match against Turkey have limited club games in the last month — and the Turks made it all look so unnecessary by drawing 1-1 at the Dynamo Stadion in Dresden. With the game on TV only 18,000 turned up, despite the fact that six of the home clubs players were in the side.

Dynamo Dresden pulled in 28,000 for their home game with Stahl Riesa who are hardly the biggest crowd pullers, and they got value for money. Peters Kotte had put Dynamo one up before late comers had got in and within seconds, Hans-Jurgen Kreische had made it two. Then there was a lull of more than 50 minutes before Gert Heidler broke the deadlock with two goals in one minute in the second half and that ended it, 4-0.

Somewhat surprisingly FC Karl Marx Stadt have been allowed into second place above the traditional leaders like 1st FC Magdeburg and FC Carl Zeiss Jena. Karl Marx Stadt pulled in 19,000 for the visit of BFC Dynamo Berlin who looked like championship contenders too at one stage. Veteran Wilfried Gocke scored K-M's first goal in a 2-0 win, celebrating his 350th game for the club and 22 years old Joachim Muller underlined the result with a goal in the final seconds.

On this season's form Vorwarts (Frankfurt) are a much improved outfit but they still can't pull a crowd in the DDR's second city. Visiting Magdeburg got off to a fine start with goals from Siegmund Mewes and Joachim Streich but after the interval Vorwarts pulled back to 2-2 before Mewes got the winner with eight minutes to spare.

Lokomotive Leipzig have clearly recovered after their disastrous start and won comfortably away to 1st FC Union Berlin by 3-0 with goals coming at regular intervals from Andreas Roth, Andreas Bornschein and the veteran Henning Frenzel.

The only other games played in the month under review were DFV Cup matches with places in the quarter finals the prize. Carl Zeiss v. Magdeburg was the plum tie of the round, drawing a crowd of 12,000 despite the fact that neither team is in full song this season. Rudiger

East European review... East European review...

Jan Svehlik of Czechoslovakia.

Dukla Praha set the pace

WITH JAROSLAV VEJVODA back since last season from Legia Warsaw and his former side, Josef Masopust moving on to take charge of Brno, Dukla Praha have roared away into an almost unassailable position and appear destined to take their first championship title of the seventies.

In a top of the table, Prague clash, Dukla pulled in their biggest crowd for some time with more than 12,000 paying to see the visit of SK Slavia who have occupied second place for much of the current campaign. At the break it looked like deadlock with a 0-0 scoreline but within seconds of the re-start Ivan Bilsky put Dukla ahead. Later in the half another new boy, Ladislav Vizek made the game safe for Dukla, but full marks to Ivo Viktor's stand-in Jaroslav Netolicka.

The Dukla reserve goalkeeper had another fine game away to Brno the following week-end where largely thanks to him, Dukla came away with a precious point for a 0-0 draw. Aged 22 years, he seems destined to have a fine future and with the national team also seeking a replacement for Viktor, there seems no reason why he shouldn't get a chance soon.

Last time out, Dukla's home game against Lokomtoice Kosice was held over until Monday so that the TV screening wouldn't affect the weekend gates. Back to normal, a mere 1,100 paid to see Dukla hand out a 6-0 thrashing with international centre forward Zdenek Nehoda playing better than he has for some time and scoring a hat-trick.

Free-kick

This was the biggest win of the Czech season thus far but it was almost half time before Stanisalv Pelc, another Dukla youngster to shine these days, opened the scoring from a free kick. Frantisek Stanhachr increased Dukla's lead before Nehoda came along with his three in 16 minutes and Miroslav Gajdusek wound it up with a left foot shot two minutes from time.

When Dukla beat Slavia it was onw of the Prague derby days with Bohemians entertaining Sparta Prague, back in the top class after one season. More than 11,000 paid for admission, most of them Sparta fans of course, but they saw the home side get an immediate grip on things and Antonin Panenka scored the first goal after a solo run.

Panenka also laid on the chance for former Teplice international wing half Premysl Bicovsky to score number two, Bicovsky, an international, being the latest player tried at centre forward. Two up, Bohemians were coasting when the Sparta stopper Oldrich Urban got a consolation goal from a free kick in the last minute.

The following weekend Slavia and Bohemians who play on the same street in Prague played out a goal-less draw at 'Eden' befor another 11,000 crowd and that week-end the Bratislava derby, Slovan v. Inter was played on Monday for television. With Slovan previously well below their best, they rose to the occasion and beat third placed Inter by 2-0 with goals from their two centre backs, Jozef Capkovic scoring in the first half and Anton Ondrus getting the other from a penalty two minutes from time. Almost on the hour, international right winger Marian Masny missed a penalty for Slovan.

In their previous outing Slovan had been without Jan Pivarnik and Ondrus away to Banik Ostrava where they had fielded a strange looking side with six relatively unknowns. Despite their weakened side, Slovan did better than in many away games in their championship seasons, scoring first through wing half Juraj Novotny, but finally going down 2-1.

Last time out, Slovan were away to much improved Trencin who scored first through their midfield player Milan Sokol. But early in the second half, Marian Masny got a vital goal for Slovan and they hung on to gain a precious point. Slovan have a home game in hand over Dukla, put off before they played Queens Park Rangers but even assuming that they win, this would still leave them trailing behind Dukla by six points.

Other clubs have been having mixed fortunes. Sparta have disappointed their supporters quite a few times but have won twice in their last two games. At home to Spartak Trnava they won 2-0 with goals from their centre forwards Jiri Klement and Milan Cermak, and away to VSS Kosice, Sparta won 1-0 with a goal from right back Zdenek Caudr.

VSS are having an inexplicably bad time. Traditionally they are the top team in Kosice, but this season Lokomotive are safe in mid-table while VSS are even underneath newly promoted Frydek-Mistek at the moment with only three wins and one draw against ten defeats. They have some useful players including centre forward Dusan Gallis whose headed goal beat England in Bratislava and the midfield dynamo Jaroslav Pollack who does so well in the international arena.

Another Slovak club with an even bigger name that is currently in trouble is Spartak Trnava. Very slightly they have pulled away from the bottom though two defeats or a come-back by VSS could change things. Karol Dobias, veteran right back turned libero for his club, who starred in midfield for the National team in the European championship is often the hero. He and Ladislav Kuna who produced a great solo run to score the only goal to beat Zilina 1-0 are Trnava's big hopes for survival.

S'GATE'

Schnuphase wrapped things up for Zeiss with a second half goal and once more the veterans Ducke and Vogel had half a game each.

Lokomotive Leipzig also won at home with Bornschein, Wolfram Lowe and Dieter Kuhn all beating Sachsenring Zwaickaus's star international goalkeeper. This game had been won a long time when Michael Braun made it 3-1.

Dynamo Dresden also claimed their place in the last eight at the expense of Dynamo Berlin. Reserve striker Rainer Sachse got two first half goals and after the break Hans-Jurgen Kreische made it 3-0 for Dresden before the visitors got a consolation goal that probably didn't console them at all.

Others through to the last eight are Stahl Riesa who beat Union Berlin 4-0; FC Hansa Rostock, HFC Chemie and Rot Weiss Erfurt who won 4-1 away to the Reserve team of Divsion II club Vorwarts Stralsund. However, Vorwarts Frankfurt could only draw 2-2 after being 2-1 down on the hour, away to Motor Suhl and have to replay.

Czechs will be difficult

News from Scotland by Alex Gordon

CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S great run of 24 international games without defeat took a nose-dive in West Germany on the same night Scotland were beating Wales 1-0 in the World Cup-tie at Hampden.

There was much jubilation in Scotland at both results, but my advice to the fans is: Forget them! For a start the Czechs fielded a vastly-weakened side when they lost 2-0 to West Germany, who were eager and determined to atone for their defeat from Czechoslovakia in the Final of the European Championship in Yugoslavia in the close season.

The record books now say Heinz Flohe and Erich Beer scored both goals in Dortmund. Those goals and that game will have nothing whatsoever to do with the form of Vaclav Jezek's team by the time they reach Hampden in September for their return World Cup-tie.

Scotland kept themselves in contention with that slender victory over Wales and there has been much argument over West German referee Ferdinand Berwisi's handling of the tie. Certainly it looked as though the only way he would award a penalty-kick would be if the victim had lost a limb in some vicious tackle. Even then you couldn't be sure!

The Scots claimed two penalty-kicks and they had a lot of support. They claimed another when Joe Jordan went crashing in the second-half, but this was definitely a dive ... a take-off even Superman would have been proud of. Then Danny McGrain — after a superb piece of tenacious play — went sprawling, but again I had to agree with Berwisi's judgment. Dai Davies went for the ball — and got it.

That's not to say, however, that the other penalty claims were not valid. Anyway, the referee said "No way" (or words to that effect because he didn't speak a word of English) and that was that. Bruce Rioch was desperately unlucky with a left foot shot that sizzled past Davies, but clattered against the upright before bouncing back into the relieved 'keeper's hands. Archie Gemmill, too, didn't have much luck with a second-half effort that had Davies struggling, but it bounced on the top of the bar and rebounded to safety.

So the only goal came in the first-half. It was a wonderful build-up, but a disappointing finish. Bruce Rioch saw the superb Danny McGrain on the overlap on the right and sent him free. McGrain took it in his stride, checked and sent it over low to his Celtic colleague and great personal friend Kenny Dalglish. On the same ground not so long ago Dalglish had been found in exactly the same position against Finland and he neatly flicked the ball between his legs into the net past the bemused 'keeper.

Kenny tried his luck again with the same sharp movement. This time he didn't succeed in turning it directly towards goal. It may have gone in, certainly Davies was beaten, but the unfortunate Ian Evans helped it on its way via his outstretched leg. That was the only goal — and after 180 minutes of World Cup soccer no Scottish player has got his name on the scoresheet.

This lack of the killer touch almost proved fatal. There wasn't long to go when the towering, menacing figure of John Toshack got clear of a hesitant defence to get a good look at goal to direct a header towards the net, but his precision and power wasn't all that it might have been and Alan Rough did well to dive to his right and hold the ball as the Scots in the crowd held their breath.

If that one had gone in it would have been goodbye Argentina for Scotland. There would have been an uproar North of the Border, but because it didn't beat Rough the entire incident has been lightly touched upon and forgotten. That's not good.

You can be certain that such a lapse in defence would have been punished severely by Czechoslovakia. In fact, the Scots should know by now that the Czechs can pounce suddenly on these type of openings and make them pay. Their two goals in Prague proved this.

Comparing Wales to Czechoslovakia is a bit like comparing Pink Floyd to the Bay City Rollers in the musical world. One has distinct class and knows where it is going. The other is full of energy and very rarely do anything spectacular.

The Welsh are making a lot of noises about being the only British team to qualify for the quarter-finals of the last European Championship. So what? The main dangers in their qualifying section were Hungary and Austria — and they are hardly world powers. England had to contend with eventual winners Czechoslovakia and Scotland made all their mistakes at Hampden to allow Spain to go through. Surely no Welshman could claim that Austria and Hungary — two depressed international countries — are on a par with Czechoslovakia and Spain!

Wales will undoubtedly make things tough for both Scotland and Czechoslovakia on their own ground, but have they got the class to beat both countries? I doubt it. Leighton James must be delighted that McGrain does not play in England. If he did James's value of £300,000 might need a second estimation.

Toshack is good in the air, but so, too, is Gordon McQueen. Brian Flynn is a buzzer, but he is competing where Scotland are their strongest — in midfield. If John Mahoney is completely fit he will make a difference, but it shouldn't be enough to reverse the Hampden result.

Don Masson missed the Welsh match because of an injury sustained playing for Queen's Park Rangers in the midweek match against Coventry City — just seven days before the Hampden game. The fact that Welsh skipper Terry Yorath was the man responsible for that injury was most unfortunate.

Best midfield

Birmingham's bustling, versatile Kenny Burns slotted in and did a fine job. However, let's not start playing around with the best midfield in Britain. When Don Masson is fit he should be in the team beside Rioch and Gemmill.

Burns? He has proved he is international class and he is obviously a proud Scot. We need players like him and he must be included in future international squads. Finding a place for him in the team should be a happy problem.

The next thing on Scotland's international agenda is the Challenge Game against Sweden at Hampden in April. It could be a very interesting match and players such as Willie Pettigrew, of Motherwell, and Aberdeen's Willie Miller might be given a chance to show their qualities again in the dark blue jersey.

We could also do with some cover for Alan Rough. We all know the capabilities of David Harvey (Leeds) and Jim Stewart (Kilmarnock) so it could be time to give someone such as George Wood, of Blackpool, an opportunity to show his class. I have only seen Wood on TV where they like to linger longingly on blunders by 'keepers and he has come through unscathed so far. He looks confident enough and has a good pair of hands, but we will never know what he can do in a Scotland shirt if we don't give him his chance and the match against Sweden could be the ideal tester for him.

After that game comes the Home International Championship and after that Scotland are almost certain to do a swift three-game tour of South America in June. Dates and opposition already pencilled in are Brazil in Rio de Janeiro on June 12 and Argentina in Buenos Aires the following Saturday. The third game could be against either Uruguay or Chile.

That can't be bad preparation for the game against Czechoslovakia. We have got a fairly settled line-up at the moment and let's hope that it stays that way for the important matches. Certainly, for once, we don't have the problems of England. For that we have to thank Willie Ormond — and the sooner the SFA stop mucking around over his contract then the better it will be for Scotland's international chances.

Guy Thys, manager of the Belgian national team, third from the left.

GOOD RUN FOR THYS

THE NEW coach of the Belgian national team Guy Thys, who took over from Raymond Goethals last summer, is doing extremely well with regard to qualification for the World Cup.

TOP TWO

THE TWO leading Belgian teams, champions FC Bruges and cup holders Anderlecht, are dominating the 1976-77 championships, which consists of 34 games.

FC Bruges eliminated Real Madrid last October and seems even stronger than last season when Bruges were victorious in their UEFA-campaign vs. Lyon, Ipswich, AS Roma, AC Milano and Hamburg S.V. Only in the final were the Belgians dashed — against a stronger Liverpool.

The blue-and-blacks from Bruges are still coached by the imperturbable Austrian Ernst Happel. Forward Roger Van Gool left the team and plays now for Cologne in the German *Bundesliga*.

So far, his departure has left a certain emptiness and Roger Davies (from Derby County) seems to be too static, too slow and technically not very gifted.

Anderlecht, undoubtedly the Belgian team with the most prestigous badges of honour (16 league championships, and five times Cup winners and once European Cup Winners Cup victors), started the season with a new coach, Raymond Goethals, the former coach of the Belgian national team.

Here, too, the British reinforcement (Duncan McKenzie from Leeds United) is having some trouble adjusting himself completely to the Anderlecht way of playing, so different from what he was used to in England.

Belgium won in the very nick of time its initial game against Iceland, but the Netherlands, being the favourites, didn't do much better a few days later. In October, Holland really disappointed against Northern Ireland and Belgium defeated George Best and Co. a month later with a convincing 2-0.

Thys is a happy man, the confidence of the players is growing and he has succeeded in replacing the older players systematically by younger talent. Only three old-timers remain in the team: captain and goalkeeper Piot, Vanden Daele and Lambert. The most promising youngsters are: Ludo Coeck (21), Vander Elst (21), Vercauteren (19), Verheyen (23), Vandereycken (23), Gerets (23), Renquin (23) and with experienced internationals such as Van Gool, Maertens, Van Binst, it is obvious that Guys Thys is confident.

Practice

Before the next qualification game (vs. the Netherlands in March 1977) the "White Devils" will play practice games vs. Italy in January and Israel in February.

Thys, a former player for Beerschot and Standard, had a famous soccer father, Yvan Thys, with half a dozen caps in the twenties. Thys was successively coach of Cercle Bruges, Lokeren, Wezel, Herentals, Beveren, Union and FC Antwerp.

Thys is not as defensive minded as his predecessor. He does not belong to the authoritarian school of coaches, he's rather a diplomat. As the coach of the national team he has a two year contract, until June 1978. An extension of his contract will not depend on qualification for Argentina. His main mission is the development of young players. Two victories for a start is not bad at all.

BELGIAN Newsletter From John Rypens

Referees are in trouble

BELGIAN SOCCER referees have a reputation of doing much better abroad than in their own league. Fred Delcort, for example, got felicitations from high UEFA-officials after the game Borussia-AC Torino in which he sent off three Italian players — Caporale, Zaccarelli and Castellini.

In Belgium the referees are having trouble with the fans and the officials of the Belgian league. Jan Peeters had some trouble during the Brussels derby RWDM-Anderlecht, then there was the "case" of Goovaerts who had to be protected by the police after the game Winterslag-Anderlecht and could only safely return home many hours later.

The same mishap occurred to Pierre Wouters in Lokeren. Belgian referees don't have an independent organisation and the Belgian Soccer Federation is responsible for them.

Organised

The referees wanted more co-operation from the national Federation and organized a Press Conference to expose their distress. They suggested that they be able in the future to punish captains and coaches who deliberately encourage misconduct.

Unfortunately, they reckoned without their hosts in order to inform the press on such a delicate matter, they needed the assent of the National Federation and the referees neglected to inform their leaders of the press conference. The result: two of the leading refs, Rion and Van Meickebeke, were suspended for three months. The others got away with cautions.

After this the referees seem even more frustrated and intimidated. They refuse to give comments to the press after the games and some of them are even afraid to join the traditional drink with journalists and players after the games. . . .

THERE were 12 minutes still to play in Rome's Olympic Stadium, with Italy holding a fragile one-goal lead over England in their World Cup-tie. An arrogant flick from Franco Causio cut out Dave Clement, and Romeo Benetti in the inside left position, cut down the left-hand side of the penalty area unchallenged to hit in a fast low cross. There, waiting on the penalty spot to move in and crash a diving header past Ray Clemence for that important second goal, was Roberto Bettega, the young goal-scorer who has blossomed this season into one of Juventus' major stars after several years among the supporting cast. England manager Don Revie had warned his team that Bettega was deadly in the air, but he flung himself forward with such force and pace that no one could come near him.

SO, WHO IS THIS BETTEGA?

by Keir Radnedge

BETTEGA WAS born in Turin on December 27, 1950 and is one of the few local players to find his way directly into the Juventus plans. He came up through their youth sides, and was signed as a professional in 1968.

For a year he sat around without playing a game. He thought he had been forgotten and was more than pleased to get away when Juventus loaned him to second division Varese in the summer of 1969.

Varese had just been relegated, but with Bettega on the right wing desperately keen to make a name for himself, they shot straight back the following year. Bettega hit 13 goals in 30 games as Varese topped *Serie B* and that was more than enough for Juventus to recall him.

For Varese his loss was a disaster. Shorn of their goal force they clung on in the first division for a year, then went down again. But Bettega went up and up.

He made his debut for Juventus on October 27, 1970, in a 1-0 away win against Catania in Sicily and made an immediate impact, finishing as the club's top scorer with 13 goals in 28 games. Only Roberto Boninsegna (24), Pierino Prati (19) and Beppe Savoldi (15) finished ahead of him.

Juventus finished fourth, but not before Bettega, still only 21, had gained his first taste of European action in the last Fairs Cup competition which saw, Juve, unbeaten all the way, lose the title on away goals (2-2, 1-1) to Leeds.

Already by now he was a budding international too. He had won the first of two under-21 caps, and played the first of four matches for the Italian under-23s in which he would score three times.

He was Juventus' own golden boy. His ability in the air was already being compared with that of John Charles and he couldn't wait for the new season. It would bring both triumph and despair.

Bettega started like an express train. In the first 14 games he hit ten goals — the tenth coming in a 1-1 draw with Fiorentina.

Then . . . tragedy. Bettega was struck down by a lung infection. First came long days in hospital, then convalescence at home, and soon it was clear the season was already over for him.

Juventus went on to win the league by one point — the title the players dedicated to the memory of coach Armando Picchi, whose sudden death had shocked *Calcio* — and reach the quarter finals of the new UEFA Cup, where a team of reserves were narrowly eliminated by Wolves (Top Juve scorer Anastasi managed only 11 goals).

Seven months Bettega was out of soccer. He was even worrying that he might have to quit the game. Then president Giampiero Boniperti encouraged him in thoughts of a comeback, and during the summer of 1972 it was arranged that he should train alone under the guidance of 52-year-old Lucidio Sentimenti, Juve's former Italian international goalkeeper.

Bettega was highly nervous about the new season. When Juve put together this forward line in practice matches, his anxiety is understandable: Causio, Altafini, Anastasi, Capello, Haller, For the first few months he remained a reserve, slotting in frequently to cover for injuries. But coach Cestmir Vycpalek finally decided to give him a run in January 1973, after Juve had been held to a sterile 0-0 draw at home by Atalanta.

Bettega's return saw a 2-0 away win over Internazionale which put Juventus on top of the table, but it wasn't until a 1-0 win against Lazio a few weeks later that he started to settle down.

Brilliant

Bettega had scored only twice before during the season, but against Lazio he hit the only goal and said afterwards: 'I feel so much happier now. That's made me feel I'm really worth a place again.'

He scored again in the 2-2 draw the next week at Milan — a match in which Gianni Rivera ended Dino Zoff's record unbeaten run of 904 minutes — and immediately Enzo Bearzot, then in charge of the under-23s, picked him to face Turkey.

Bettega's goal against Milan had been a brilliant effort, and he worked hard in midfield too.

"Bettega is a complete player," said Vycpalek, but left him out for the Champions' Cup tie away to Ujpest Dozsa.

Bettega was back again for a 4-1 win against Palermo, though, and scored one of the goals which meant Juve were four points behind Milan with five games left.

Then he scored two more in the 3-2 away win at Ternana which followed close on the heels of the 0-0 Champions' Cup draw at Derby which put Juve in the final, and now Juve were two points from Milan with three games left.

With one game to go, Juventus — and Lazio — had closed the gap to one point on Milan. And on that highly dramatic last Sunday, while Lazio were going down 1-0 at Napoli and Milan 3-5 at Verona, Juventus squeezed home with a 2-1 win away to Roma (Milan took some revenge in the Cup Final, winning 5-2 on penalties against Juve after a 1-1 draw).

Bettega's contribution to Juve's 15th championship had been eight goals in 27 games. But he had tired towards the end, and was virtually anonymous when Juventus lost 1-0 to Ajax in Belgrade in the Champions' Cup final.

Career

Helmut Haller came on as substitute with half an hour left, and it soon looked as if that was the end of Bettega's career in Turin. A lot of Juve's fans had decided that illness had robbed him of the necessary spark to make a success of a career with the Zebras, and it seemed Boniperti thought so too, for Bettega figured as one of the makeweights in Juventus' £1 million offer to Cagliari for Gigi Riva.

The deal fell through, and Bettega stayed, but season 1973-74 hardly began very brightly. Before the league had begun Juve were out of the Champions' Cup, beaten 0-2, 3-2 in the first round by Dynamo Dresden.

Bettega did score the winner in the opening

Gentile (left) and Bettega celebrate after Italy had beaten England 2-0 in Rome.

2-1 league win over Foggia, and added more goals in a 3-1 win over Lazio, a 5-1 win against Verona and a 2-2 draw with Cesena. This latter game also brought him a booking — for dissent.

But in playing for the under-23s against Switzerland B he was hurt after 42 minutes and had to be substituted, and then, at the halfway stage Lazio overhauled Juventus in the league.

Bettega, right out of touch, was jeered mercilessly by the fans during a 0-0 draw at home to dour Vicenza and Vycpalek dropped him and sent him off to the mountains for a week's holiday.

Why had everything gone sour? Bettega didn't mince his words. "The problem is all because of team selection. One week I've got Anastasi to play alongside me up front. The next week it's Altafini. It's all right when Anastasi is there, we get on well, because he works to make chances, too. But with Jose I have to do all the work for the two of us and I just don't have the chance to think about scoring myself."

Anastasi didn't like the constant swapping and switching either and Juventus finished second in the league — Bettega having claimed eight goals in 24 games.

Vycpalek was shifted 'upstairs' at the end of the season, and former international centre half Carlo Parola returned for his second spell as coach.

He and Bettega never quite hit it off. Bettega, concerned that he was finding goals harder to come by, felt his future would be better assured at Juventus if Parola would use him in midfield.

Parola, on the contrary, felt that he had more than enough midfielders (Causio, Capello, Cuccureddu, Furino, Viola, etc.) and that Bettega was badly needed up front. It was no help to Parola that 1974-75 seemed to help Bettega's case more than his own. Though Juve won the championship Bettega scored only six goals in his 27 league games and only one in the ten-game UEFA Cup run which ended when Twente beat Juve 3-1, 1-0 in the semi-finals.

But for Bettega the season was not yet over. On June 5, 1975, his patience and determination were rewarded with his first full cap for Italy, in the 1-0 win over Finland in Helsinki in the European Championship.

Chances

Last season could not be counted among Juve's best, though again they were second in the league and it took Borussia Moenchengladbach to oust them from the Champions' Cup (in the second round).

But for Bettega, more chances with Italy proved that he had at last arrived. He came on as substitute for Anastasi after an hour in the 0-0 draw with Poland in Warsaw in October last year, and was later picked for the Bicentennial tournament in the United States. That was a disaster. In the match against Brazil, which Italy needed to win to win the tournament, half-time substitute Bettega allowed himself to be provoked into taking a swing at Mario Antonio in the 65th minute and was sent off.

That cost him his place in the first international of this season, the visit to Denmark. But Bearzot considered the 1-0 victory so deplorable, that Bettega was back, in place of Paolino Pulici, for the friendly in Rome against Yugoslavia.

Campaign

Bettega scored twice — the start of a brilliant week. The following Wednesday he laid on one of Juve's two vital goals in the UEFA Cup win over Manchester City and, on the Sunday, scored two more as Juve began their league campaign with an away win over Lazio.

Luxembourg and the World Cup qualifiers brought his fifth international in mid-October, and Bettega hit two more in the 4-1 win in the Grand Duchy.

Just before the big match with England Bettega scored twice in Juve's 3-2 away win over Milan and that meant that he had totalled six goals in five league games. That, in itself, should have been enough warning for Revie's England.

But as we all saw — either live or on television — Roberto Bettega is looking unstoppable this season!

A King, y
without a

FOOTBALL BIOGRAPHIES — authorized, ghosted or just thrown together — usually fall into two categories. Either they are of the "how I scored the winning goal at San Siro" variety, aimed strictly at the teenage market, or they are full of "revelations" about drunken orgies before Cup Finals, under-the-counter payments and others such unedifying aspects of our national game.

Frankly, I do not cherish either kind, and their puerile titles, "Heading for goal" or "Top of the Kop" are a good enough reason to keep them unopened on my bookshelves. But when a biography deals with a truly great player, and it is written by Jeff Powell, who is well able to rise to the occasion (occasionally!), the temptation is harder to resist.

So, it was with a deal of anticipation that I sat down to read "Bobby Moore" (Everest Books £4.25) by the Daily Mail's No. 1 football correspondent. In the blurb on the jacket, presumably also written by Powell, Moore is introduced in this way: "Despite his fame, nobody knows Bobby Moore. The giant of sport has always remained the man apart, the king without a friend, brilliant but unapproachable".

Sounds good, but exaggerated. I, myself, always found Bobby pleasant and quite easily "approachable".

Okay, let's accept Powell's highly contentious valuation, and see whether the following 190 pages solve the enigma, unveil the complex personality, and finally allow the "real" Bobby Moore to stand-up and be recognized. Powell does a good, workmanlike job, but this authorized biography has many contradictions, omissions, and indulges in window-dressing.

Suspicion

Any book which introduces its subject in such a corny way as "Robert Frederick Moore, only son of Robert and Doris Moore, born in Upney Hospital on April 12, 1941" must be viewed with suspicion as to its literary merit, and when later it is revealed that Bobby also has another Christian name "Chelsea" (yes, Chelsea!), one begins to doubt even the most banal information in it. For instance are we talking about the same Bobby Moore who lifted three prestigious trophies in three consecutive years at Wembley as skipper of F.A. Cup, European Cup Winners' Cup, and World Cup winning teams?

If so, why is he so bitter about West Ham and Manager Ron Greenwood? Life with the Hammers couldn't have been quite so frustrating if our hero won all those medals and a record 108 England Caps besides. What made Bobby run? In one word — ambition! And he felt that during the late sixties, West Ham were not equipped to win anything, they were a "soft touch". He blames Greenwood for that weakness. The manager "who knows more about football than any man alive" bought bad players, insisted on playing clean, classical football, got rid of the troublemakers and the kickers.

With such an enemy as Moore, who needs a friend? The more Powell, through Moore, (or the other way round) berates Greenwood, the more sympathy and admiration the reader must feel for the West Ham boss. Bobby says that Ron couldn't motivate his players. On the face of it, he is wrong, because his estimation of West Ham's potential is wrong!

Firstly, who "motivated" Bobby to become one of the best footballers of all time? Who "motivated Geoff Hurst to develop into a world class striker from a "cart horse" wing-half? Who gave Martin Peters the vision to be ten years ahead of his time?

It must be accepted that West Ham is essentially a "small" club, with no more potential than London "neighbours" Fulham, Orient or Brentford. While these clubs sank into the lower divisions, the Hammers remained in the First Division with a fine reputation and a good following. Theirs is not a record to be ashamed of! Moore didn't win a Championship medal, but neither did Johnny Haynes, Len Shackleton or Stanley Matthews. Bobby tells us that he wanted to move to Totenham in 1967, because they were "the team of the moment". He never mentions that such a transfer would have been very lucrative financially — a curious omission in a book so brutally frank on other subjects.

Consistent

When Bobby finally moved to Fulham, the club wanted a fee for him. He says: "I couldn't believe it of them. That was disappointing after everything we'd been through together. They'd signed me for nothing and had years of service from me and now they were using me to help balance the books. After all, what was £25,000 to them against everything we'd achieved in my time there? I had a right go at Ron but he kept saying the board were insisting on a fee"

"Everything we had achieved" — so why grumble? For Ramsey, who "couldn't hold a candle to Greenwood" Bobby has slightly more affection. A "player's manager, a great motivator, a sensitive man hurt by criticism".

But Bobby blames Ramsey (who doesn't) for taking-off Bobby Charlton at Leon against West Germany, and for not sending-on an extra striker earlier against Poland at Wembley. He also resents the fact that Sir Alf didn't stay with him in Bogota to see the "bracelet affair" through, but moved-on with the England party to Mexico.

I disagree! Ramsey had a job to do, and his duty was to stay with the players preparing for the World Cup. Both Dr. Andrew Stephens and Dennis Fellows remained in Bogota, and Jimmy Greaves, Bobby's friend, was also there to give practical and moral support.

To sum-up Bobby's feelings about the two most important influences on his career, a conversation is recorded between him and 'Budgie' Byrne: "Let's face it Bob, Ramsey didn't hold a candle to Greenwood on knowledge of the game. Not in the same street. Between them they'd have made a good manger. Ron's knowledge and Alf's way with the players."

Moore pondered a marriage of his two managers. "Not bad," he said. "But not a patch on you and me, old son. Not a patch on you and me."

It is unlikely that either Ramsey, who was given a knighthood for services to football, or FIFA coach

yes...not a friend

by Leslie Vernon

Greenwood would lose any sleep over the competition coming from the partnership of a player, who hasn't coached anyone in his life, and the manager of an obscure South African club. But this kind of self-confidence is in keeping with Bobby's straightforward, reliable personality.

Disappointing

According to the book, Moore was a "big occasion" player, who should have played every game at Wemble. Untrue! He was amazingly consistent, and consistently brilliant in the most humdrum games. Apart from the God-given talent, he learned his football catechism from Malcolm Allison: "Keep forever asking yourself. If I get the ball now, who will I give it to?"

He told me that was di Stefano's secret at Real Madrid. "So simple. So real. So easy. I've carried that with me into the middle of Wembley, Maracana, Hampden Park, every great stadium. 'Wherever it was, I would always know that maybe the left back was free, the right winger running, the inside left dropping off his man into space for me.

"There's nothing complicated about vision. It's pictures in your mind, put there purely and simply by looking around yourself. It's good because it's so simple. The bad players are the players who make the game difficult."

The book is beautifully illustrated with several photographs. Pictures of Bobby and his wife Tina are brilliant studies by Terry O'Neill. Powell's description of the "Bogota affair" is outstanding, and he is very good in describing the social changes in the life of a "star-footballer".

I can highly recommend this volume. Despite its various shortcomings, it gave me nearly as much pleasure reading it as watching Bobby play — one cannot say more. And having read it, I know Bobby a great deal better, and understand more fully what made him tick. A king indeed, but not without a friend!

Bobby Moore (extreme right) at the opening of his new pub 'Moore's'. Also pictured left to right: Rodney Marsh, comedian Kenny Lynch, Frank Lampard, Alan Ball, George Best and Malcolm MacDonald.

DIARY

THE Swiss Football Association have just discovered that Severino Minelli who was thought to have made 80 international appearances for his country has in fact made only 79. The match with Austria on June 16, 1931 has been discovered to have been a representative game not a full international. But Minelli still holds the record number of appearances for Switzerland.

* * *

BRAZILIAN national team manager Osvaldo Brandao has announced a list of 18 players for a series of international friendlies which includes four survivors from the 1974 World Cup: Rivelino, Leao, Marco Antonio and Francisco Marinho.

* * *

ATTENDANCES in Austria since the introduction of the new Bundesliga of 10 teams have been disappointing in recent seasons. But recently in bad weather an all time low was reached when the five games averaged only 3,040 spectators.

* * *

GIACINTO FACCHETTI won his 90th cap for Italy against England recently. He is the most capped of Italian internationals and seems likely to join the select few in the world who have made 100 appearances.

* * *

SANTOS the Brazilian club claim to be one of the most travelled of all time. Their record of 410 matches abroad is probably a record. They have visited 58 different countries and made their most trips to the United States of America where their most famous player Pele now plays for New York Cosmos. Santos started their trek originally in 1954 by going to Argentina.

Swiss record for Minelli —minus one!

IN 13 years of the West German Bundesliga only 149 matches have had to be postponed through bad weather. The worst season was 1974-75 when 16 had to be rearranged. But at the same time only one match has had to be abandoned because of crowd disturbances and that was in November 1976 when the Kaiserslautern v Fortuna Dusseldorf match was abandoned by the referee.

* * *

Czechoslovakia used 13 players in their recent international in Hanover against West Germany and they represented no fewer than nine different club sides. The Germans won 2-0 to end a run of 24 unbeaten games by the Czechs.

* * *

THE German sports magazine Kicker has produced a complete team of players named Muller! In four-three-three formation, it is: Manfred (1FC Nurnberg); Albert (FC Homburg), Ludwig (FC Hassfurt), Heribert (FV 04 Wurzburg), Helmut (Eintracht Frankfurt), Gerd (Gottingen 05), Hans (Stuttgart), Max (Wurzburg), Hans (FC Tuttlingen), Gerd (Bayern Munich), Dieter (1FC Cologne).

Rivelino of Brazil

CYPRUS HISTORY

APART FROM allowing Malcolm Macdonald the opportunity of equalling the individual goalscoring record in one international for England, the Cyprus national team has meant little or nothing as a force in the game.

They did manage to send waves of panic through the corridors of power over here when we had to play in Limassol during the abortive European Championship qualification and considering the plight of the island at the time, the Cypriots did well to even contemplate playing football at all.

Ravaged by civil war with Greek and Turkish Cypriots fighting each other, football was the last thing expected to start. But throughout the history of the modern world it is strange just how quickly the game has either resumed after hostilities have ended or indeed carried on somehow during them.

The game has been organised in Cyprus for more than 40 years now and the Cyprus Football Association was formed in 1934. That year saw the start of a League championship won initially by Trast who also took the Cup competition in the same season.

From 1942 to 1944 the competition was interrupted by occupation during World War Two and again in the late 1950s and early 1960s by further strife of a more internal nature.

Last season Cyprus again came into the headlines when Sotiris Kaiafas of the champion club Omonia Nicosia finished as Europe's leading goalscorer with 39 League goals.

Many Cypriot players find their way into Greek clubs, and it seemed that Kaiafas would join the exodus at the end of the season but though AEK Athens were more than interested, Kaiafas remained with his only senior club.

Among those who have gone to Greece are Panikos Krystallis (AEK), Kyrikos Koureas (Olympiakos and then Ethnikos), Pampos Papadopoulos (Olympiakos) and Tasos Kyriakou (AEK).

It had been in 1948 that Cyprus gained affiliation to FIFA but it has only been in recent years that the island has entered international competition. Without doubt their most successful moment came in February 1973 when they defeated Northern Ireland 1-0 in a World Cup qualifying match.

The most capped Cypriot international is Andreas Stylianou who has made nearly 50 appearances for his country. His club Apoel of Nicosia is one of some 41 in Cyprus and it is estimated that there are nearly 12,000 registered players in the country.

Most of the grounds are rather small but stadiums in Nicosia, Limassol and Famagusta can accommodate around 10,000 spectators each.

One of the leading Cypriot teams has even competed in the Greek First Division and though the national side failed to score in any of its six Nations Cup qualifying matches in the recent European Championship series, undoubtedly there continues to be an improved standard of football and without the hostilities which had taken place just beforehand they might well have caused a problem or two on their own soil.

CLUB FOCUS—UTRECHT—by JACK ROLLIN

IMPROVED POSITION PLEASES

ENJOYING A better than average season in Holland at present are FC Utrecht. In their present form they have only been in existence since 1970 of course, but can claim a longer history in other guises.

In 1958 DOS Utrecht had been Dutch champions, the first such honour for them though they failed to survive in the European Champion Clubs Cup losing in the first round to Sporting Lisbon on a 6-4 aggregate though both matches conceded by the odd goal were keenly contested.

Later on in the Fairs Cup a selection rather than a club side from Utrecht, this city on the Crooked Rhine, played in this competition. Actually the oldest club and one of the founder members of the game in Holland was Hercules from Utrecht who were formed in 1882.

Coming more up to date FC Utrecht made a slow start to the 1976-77 season losing their opening match at home to Feyenoord by two clear goals. Then they managed away draws against FC Amsterdam 2-2 and Roda JC — before recording their initial win over NEC Nijmegen 2-1 also at home.

In the close season there had been a number of new signings notably another Yugoslavian in the shape of goalkeeper Blagoje Istatov, a 29 year old formerly with Partizan Belgrade, striker Piet Hamberg from Wageningen only 22 years old, centre-back Ben Schubert a 25 year old from PEC Zwolle and midfield player Jan Streuer also aged 25 from MVV Maastricht.

Sweeper

Utrecht now have two Yugoslavians in fact the other one being a far better known player in the form of Blagoje Paunovic a 29 year old sweeper who was a regular in the national team for several years and played in the 1968 European Championship final against Italy.

His partner in the middle of the defence is usually Joop Van Maurik another experienced player aged 31. But in reserve Schubert has proved a more than able deputy in the middle of the back four. Van Maurik lists Velox, Holland Sport and HVC as his earlier clubs.

The youngest player in the defence is right back Andre Oostrum a 23 year old who can also play in midfield. He often switches positions with midfield player John Wilschut (24) who came to Utrecht from Elinkwijk.

Left-back Marco Cabo (28) made his name originally in midfield where his style was not unlike that of the former Feyenoord international Wim Van Hanegem.

With either Wilschut or Oostrum in midfield the other two players in this department have been Jan Van Staa and Streuer. Van Staa is only 21 and was recruited from Velox, Streuer as mentioned was from MVV and previously with Twente Enschede.

Up front it has invariably been Piet Hamberg, Leo Van Veen and Andre Hulshorst. Hamberg another newcomer plays on the right, Van Veen in the centre and Hulshorst on the left. Both these last named players are 30 in fact.

Paunovic (left), Oblak and Acimovic, pictured after playing for Yugoslavia.

Van Veen is a former DOS Utrecht player in fact so can lay claim to more local experience than several of his colleagues. He has been the leading scorer this season along with Streuer. Hulshorst was previously with Heracles.

In reserve the club has several useful members including midfield players Ries Cote a 29 year old also one of Elinkwijk, Harrie Van Den Ham only 21 and forwards Wim Flight 20 and Ton Witbaard 23 from Hilversum.

Position

Through September, Utrecht improved their position until they suffered their biggest reverse of the season in October losing 7-0 to Ajax in Amsterdam.

But rather than have a detrimental effect, it appeared to produce even stronger determination and since then there has been a steady climb up the table.

The Ajax defeat came at a time when Utrecht's trainer Han Berger who is much younger than half his team at only 26 was being considered as the brightest coach on the Dutch scene. And Berger and his squad were able to exact some measure of revenge in the Dutch Cup when the draw paired them with Ajax again.

With ground advantages and a crowd of 18,000 willing them on, they recovered from being a goal down in 37 minutes to equalise in the second half and finally get the winner through Streuer only a month after losing by seven clear goals to the same side.

It was a fully merited victory and was achieved without Paunovic who is their most experienced player. But there are no real stars in the side, just a useful blend of competent footballers who have been in the game for some time and know what is required.

Though it is rather early to think in terms of the Utrecht club rivalling the likes of Ajax, Feyenoord, Roda and PSV, their improvement is gratifying and carries with it only one cloud.

Inevitably perhaps in this day and age, their successes have brought with them a rowdy element among the younger supporters who have succeeded in getting themselves and the club a bad name. It is the price one has to pay for twentieth century progress, but Utrecht would be more than pleased to allow their football alone to speak for them.

Searching the Soccer Scene
Arthur Rotmil

Poland r course f

THE POLISH national team has recovered from a bad spell last season just in time and is now, thanks to two splendid victories, right on course to qualify for the World Cup finals in Argentina. A 2-0 away win over chief rivals Portugal, followed by a resounding 5-0 home success against Cyprus, have set them up as favourites to win this group which also includes Denmark.

The Poles, it will be remembered, surprised the soccer world first by winning the Olympic Games tournament in 1972, then by eliminating England and Wales from the 1974 World Cup and finally by finishing a glorious third in that series. But then came the inevitable anti-climax. The fine displays of the Polish footballers have prompted a number of Western European clubs to offer several of the star players lucrative contracts with extravagant signing-on fees and fabulous salaries.

Gorski . . . no longer the Polish team manager.

The Polish Federation faced with the possibility of a sudden mass exodus immediately stepped in with a rule forbidding the transfer of any international player under the age of 28. After a lengthy wrangle only one member of Poland's World Cup side, the left winger Robert Dadocha was released to play for Nantes in France. Apart from him, other senior players were later allowed to seek their fortune abroad, most of them also going to France, which already boasts a large colony of émigre Poles in all walks of life.

But those younger internationals who had been refused exit permits became unsettled and discontented. Rumours of approaches from Bayern Munich, Ajax Amsterdam and other leading European clubs have had a disturbing effect on the players concerned. For there is no money to be made in Polish football which has no professional clubs and in any case is run on a shoe string budget.

And in a Socialist State there are no commercial pickings on such a scale as is commonly accepted in the West. And so the Polish stars who saw migration as a glorious opportunity to cash in on their footballing talent were left frustrated and resentful when denied this chance by the authorities. There were also some disquietening incidents involving players like stopper Jerzy Gorgon, who was even suspended from the national team.

All these factors contributed to the loss of form of several key men. Last season Poland went through a truly disastrous period in which they lost five successive internationals, to Argentina (1-2), France (0-2), Greece (0-1), Switzerland (1-2) and the Republic of Ireland (0-2).

Performance

Next came the Olympic tournament in Montreal in which the Poles did well to reach the final, but fell to East Germany by 3-1, after a disappointing performance of a tired looking side. It was, as it turned out, their last match under manager Kazimierz Gorski who did so much for Polish football in the last four years, but alas, he too seemed unsettled by offers from abroad and his heart was no longer on the job. Immediately after the Olympics, Gorski resigned and in his place the PZPN (Polish Zwiazek Pilki Noznej) — Polish Football Federation — appointed his former assistant Jacek Gmoch (37).

This former international defender, who collected 32 caps between 1962 and 1968 was forced to give up active football following a bad accident. He has recently completed his studies and gained a degree in civil engineering.

Gmoch has made a fine start with those two aforementioned victories over Portugal and Cyprus which put Poland at the top of their

ecover— on or Argentina

World Cup qualifying group. But his greatest achievement has been to restore the confidence of the millions of Polish fans in their national side. It must be realised that he took over at a bad time, when morale was lower than in years and the setbacks only served to prolong the crisis.

Gmoch's predecessor Gorski lacked the necessary "steel" in his dealings with the errant stars. The 55-year-old coach tried hard to rebuild the side but with little success, whilst the public demanded an Olympic gold medal in Montreal. In desperation Gorski recalled some senior players although their form hardly merited selection, and they failed.

In contrast, Jacek Gmoch showed an "iron fist": Antoni Szymanowski, one of the pillars of the defence in the 1974 World Cup, who refused to take a physical test before the match with Portugal, was promptly dropped. Goalkeeper Jan Tomaszewski was also omitted; on the other hand several new players were tried out, of whom four had made highly successful débuts. As Gmoch explains: "Age and names make no difference, only current form and ambition. I am not afraid to experiment."

Fortunate

True enough against Portugal the midfielder Kasperczak was nominated as a "libero", much to the surprise of most experts. And for the match with Cyprus, Gmoch picked only two recognised defenders. "I need attacking players even among the defenders, and since they were not easy to find, I used men who can play anywhere," said the new manager.

On the whole Gmoch was fortunate with his bold selections. Of the four newly capped players the greatest impression created the outside left Stanislaw Terlecki. The just 21-year-old forward has skill, is fast, dynamic and belongs to the most dangerous strikers in the country. His new club LKS Lodz (whom he joined from Second Division Gwardia Warsaw), is currently leading the championship race, not least helped by the brilliant Terlecki. He is now widely regarded as the natural successor to Gadocha.

Another débutant has made his mark against Cyprus, the outside right Janusz Sybis from Slask Wroclaw. A pity that he is rather small, (5ft. 4in.) but nonetheless tricky and fast. From the World Cup side only Zmuda, Kasperczak, Deyna and Szarmach played against the Cypriots, while Lato was absent through injury.

But Gmoch has also fulfilled the dream of thousands of Polish football fans: He brought back Wlodzimierz Lubanski, the greatest player this country has produced, record holder of 68 caps and with 46 goals top scorer of the national team. Lubanski sustained a complicated knee injury after a reckless tackle by McFarland soon after scoring Poland's second goal in the 2-0 win over England in a World Cup qualifying tie at Chorzow in June 1973.

Lubanski . . . back in the Polish national team.

After two operations it was thought his career would be over, but the determined Wlodek (a diminutive of Wlodzimierz), staged a remarkable comeback and was then allowed to leave for Belgium, where he now plays as a professional for SC Lokeren. Lubanski's return to the national team created such a tremendous demand for tickets that the PZPN moved the match from the small Legia ground (cap. 35,000) to the national stadium in Warsaw, where 80,000 fans turned up for the visit of Cyprus!

And so Gmoch seems to be winning the race against time. In a matter of a few weeks he has restored the prestige of the national side. Without exaggeration, he is today one of the most popular personalities in Poland. There is probably no fan who does not believe that the red-and-whites will qualify for the World Cup finals.

Of course, the road to Argentina is still hard and long. Now it appears that not Portugal are the main rivals but Denmark, who can call on several full professionals scattered all over Western Europe, notably in West Germany, Belgium and Holland. The two vital ties will be staged next year, on May 1 in Copenhagen and on September 21, probably in Chorzow, where the most passionate audience in the country guarantees unflinching support for the national side.

But one must not overlook the fact that the Danes have proved something of a "bogy" men for the Poles. Twice they eliminated Poland from the Olympics (1952 and 1960), whilst in Munich (1972), where the Poles won the gold medal, their meeting ended in a fortunate 1-1 draw. The Poles still have an account to settle: their 8-0 defeat against Denmark on June 26, 1948, was the heaviest in the history of Poland's national team.

Now, Jacek Gmoch will have plenty of time to prepare his men for these tough encounters. In collaboration with his assistant Ryszard Kulesza, and the chief of his "information" service (a specialist for dossiers) Bernard Blaut, the "Plan Argentina" is being launched. No one doubts it will be successful.

ARGENTIN ARE FAV FOR WO

ERIC BATTY various qual

WITH THE World Cup final stages due to be played in South America it is inevitable that Brazil and Argentina should be the favourites, even at this stage when they have not kicked a qualifying ball. For European sides in the new world it will be uphill all the way and only a truly outstanding side from Europe could hope to beat the bogy that decrees that the World Cup will be won by a team from the continent in which it is staged.

Only once has this rule of thumb proved wrong — in 1958 when Brazil beat Sweden in the final at Stockholm, and that Brazilian team was an outstanding one by any standards. In Europe today we have no such side, and with only 18 months to go, it is to be doubted if anyone can improve that much that quick.

However from the point of view of who will qualify, there are a great many interesting points. In Africa and the Asian zones there are too many teams about which nothing is known. For myself I have never seen a game in either continent though I have seen sides from many countries of both. But I have no special knowledge of what is going on. For example . . . is North Korea (or another country) building a team behind closed doors with a full squad working at the game every day for two years . . . as the Koreans did for 1966?

Involved

Africa and Asia are a closed book to me, as indeed they are to most people. Even those most closely involved are not really informed for neither the National Associations nor the newspapers can afford to send their national team managers or top football reporters chasing round to see every team in their continent. I find it hard enough to stay informed and up to date about Europe. But the distances involved in travelling between countries in Europe and Asia are far greater, making it impossible even to guess who will qualify for 1978 at this stage.

In South America it is a different matter.

Group 1
Brazil, Paraguay, Colombia

The Paraguayans are working extremely hard to build a good side but it seems most unlikely that they can qualify against Brazil.

My tip . . . Brazil

Group 2
Uruguay, Venezuela, Bolivia

The trip to La Paz has always been a hazardous one and Uruguay seem unlikely to win there this time. But equally, while the Uruguayans have closed their doors to 50 players and had frequent changes of manager, it is beyond question that the Uruguayans are on the slide. They showed that in the 1974 series and their problems can only have become greater. Even so, Bolivia will probably not be good enough and Venezuela are still outsiders.

My tip . . . Uruguay

Group 3
Chile, Peru, Ecuador

It is a straight fight between Chile and Peru. The outcome could be decided by who gets most of their foreign-based players back for the vital games — those playing in other South American countries as well as in Europe.

North and Central America is getting more even all the time as Haiti proved in 1974 when the critical games were not played in Mexico. The Mexicans remain the strongest side though their results against the USA and Canada suggest the gap is closing fast. If the final games are held in a country like Panama or Cuba then almost anyone could qualify.

My tip . . . don't bet on anyone.

This leaves Europe which is far more like home ground.

Group 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Denmark	3	2	0	1	10	2	4
Poland	2	2	0	0	7	0	4
Portugal	2	1	0	1	1	2	2
Cyprus	3	0	0	3	1	15	0

Denmark got off to a flying start with a good 5-1 win away to Cyprus where Northern Ireland were beaten and England could only win 1-0. Fielding their foreign based professionals for the first time in the World Cup their hopes are considerably brighter but in the end I think it will be Poland, who have got off to an equally good start, beating Cyprus 5-0 at home and, vitally important, winning 2-0 away to Portugal in Porto, while Denmark crashed 0-1 in a violent game in Lisbon. The critical games now are Denmark v. Poland and Portugal, but for the Poles, Jacek Gmoch seems to have sown the seeds of another good side, taking up the pieces left him by Kazimierz Gorski.

My tip . . . Poland

Group 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Italy	2	2	0	0	6	1	4
England	3	2	0	1	6	4	4
Finland	3	1	0	2	9	7	2
Luxembourg	2	0	0	2	2	11	0

Though England were forced to struggle against Finland at Wembley and were outclassed by Italy in Rome, I am not amongst those tho think the Italians have this group sewn up. I know the Finns are optimistic about taking a point from Italy, but I doubt if they will achieve that now. More likely it will be settled on goals difference after a very tense England-Italy game next November. Italy will defend a Wembley, and none can do it better tha they. This too is where England are weak but with the right side England could force Italy to score at Wembley . . . and tha could prove to be beyond them.

My tip . . . England or Italy.

Group 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Turkey	2	1	1	0	5	1	[illegible]
East Germany	1	0	1	0	1	1	[illegible]
Malta	1	0	0	1	0	4	[illegible]
Austria	0	0	0	0	0	0	[illegible]

I do not believe that Austrian football is in any state to do more than offer a token challenge and this leaves it a straight figh between improving Turkey and an Eas German side that promised much but los its way a little when manager Georg Buschner began to prefer physica players rather than gifted men in the ke roles.

Mick Kearns of Eire halts a French att round

NA AND BRAZIL VOURITES RLD CUP

Y looks at the ifying groups

Turkey's 1-1 draw away to the DDR was a triumph though both goals came from penalties. But East Germany can still have the last word if Herr Buschner can be persuaded. His problem is much like that of England in that the men responsible will not go for skill in all departments, but if they fail they will have only themselves to blame.

My tip . . . East Germany

Group 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Belgium	2	2	0	0	3	0	4
Holland	2	1	1	0	3	2	3
N. Ireland	2	0	1	1	2	4	1
Iceland	2	0	0	2	0	2	0

Though Iceland are much improved they cannot hope to qualify now. At best they could push Northern Ireland out by beating them in Rejkjavik. The Dutch thought it was going to be a cake-walk when Belgium began with a 1-0 win away to Iceland but were jolted when they could only win in Rejkjavik by the same score and were held to 2-2 by George Best & Co., at home.

Belgium have the edge because they won where Holland failed . . . at home to the Irish but the key here is whether Johan Cruyff is recalled or not and how the two top teams fare in Belfast. If Cruyff comes back for Holland, that could let the Belgians through. Belgium will not make the same ultra-defensive mistakes they made under Raymond Goethals.

My tip . . . Belgium

ack on his goal during a World Cup qualifying game in Paris.

Group 5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
France	2	1	1	0	4	2	3
Bulgaria	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Eire	1	0	0	1	0	2	0

This is one of the weakest, if not the weakest group in Europe and after the Republic of Ireland's fine display against England at Wembley I expected them to have a very good chance. Now however, having lost in Paris and bearing in mind that goals in this group are going to be hard to obtain, the odds are stacked against them. France has the edge in goals already (for I discount the Bulgarians for whom little has gone right since the days of Ivan Kolev) and for Eire to get back they have to win away to Bulgaria.

My tip . . . France

Group 6

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sweden	2	2	0	0	4	1	4
Norway	2	1	0	1	1	2	2
Switzerland	2	0	0	2	1	3	0

This is another weak group and one in which the Norwegians started as outsiders but did Sweden a favour they will never be able to repay by beating the Swiss 1-0 with a goal from the best player they have probably ever produced, Tom Lund. Sweden have almost qualified already, for though they were beaten 3-2 away by Norway in a Scandinavian Cup game they will send a far stronger team there for the big game next September.

My tip . . . Sweden

Group 7

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Czechoslovakia	1	1	0	0	2	0	2
Scotland	2	1	0	1	1	2	2
Wales	1	0	0	1	0	1	0

As European champions, and a much improved side, the Czechs began this group as favourites and underlined this with a 2-0 win over Scotland in Prague. But they cannot always rely on Ladislav Petras coming to the rescue with goals for in the opinion of the Czechs top brass he isn't fit enough to play.

Their problem generally is a severe shortage of fire-power up front but most critical of all was the sending off (with Andy Gray) of their world class player Anton Ondrus who must now sit out the remaining three games. Ladislav Jurkemik is the obvious replacement — a good player if he settles down quickly, he could be more than adequate, but the question remains: who will score the goals away to Scotland and Wales?

My tip . . . Scotland

Group 8

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	1	1	0	0	1	0	2
Yugoslavia	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Romania	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Much will depend in this group on how the Romanians perform and here their manager Stefan Kovacs, though now widely lauded, remains a big doubt in my mind. In the last two years Romania have been draw champions despite the services of free scoring Dudu Georgescu (in league games). If they improve 50 per cent they might even qualify, but I think it more likely that they will play the decisive role by taking a point, or more, from one of their rivals.

The Yugoslavs were desperately unfortunate to lose to a late penalty goal in Madrid, and if they settle the problem of who is going to guide them quickly I think they will make it. If it were to be Rajko Mitic I would put money on it.

My tip . . . Yugoslavia.

Group 9

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hungary	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Greece	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
U.S.S.R.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Here again the biggest question mark lays over the team that hasn't played and how quickly new manager Nikita Simonian can knit his side together. The Russians have the talent — if it can be motivated and properly led — but so too do the Hungarians who have been through a long spell without defeat and got an invaluable point away to the Greeks.

Lajos Baroti, the Hungarian boss, turned a shambles into a promise overnight and the Russians have the Indian sign over Hungary and had it even the great days of Puskas & Co. I take the proven team rather than the possible one at this stage.

My tip . . . Hungary.

One last prediction. Unless the Brazilians come good, which is quite within their capabilities, the finals could go down as the poorest of all time. Even worse than 1966. Very simply because, look as one might, with time running out, there isn't an outstanding team anywhere in sight.

Bearzot recognises danger of Finland

News from Italy by Keir Radnedge

IN ROME the score was Italy 2, England 0. Yet in New York in the summer, though the Italians were once 2-0 up, they lost 3-2 in the Bicentennial Tournament.

Most people would have thought that American experience one of Enzo Bearzot's worst moments in preparing for the World Cup qualifier in the Stadio Olimpico.

Not a bit of it. In fact, after those goals from Giancarlo Antognoni and Roberto Bettega had sunk England, Bearzot explained why New York had been his most *exciting* moment in the World Cup build-up.

"My worst moment," he said, "was some time before, when I saw England beat Finland 4-1 Helsinki. That was quite a blow, because we had plenty of problems at the time.

"But New York proved to me that if we played to our strengths we would be able to beat England here in Rome. The first half in New York was the best, the most entertaining, we have ever played against any England team. Certainly the match finished badly, but for two thirds of the game we were all over them. That was what was most important for me."

How would you feel now if you were Don Revie?

"I would be worried. You see, the English so often have this superiority complex. But when we go to Wembley for once it will be different. It will be up to them to do all the worrying. They are not used to that.

"I thought Revie's mistake here was to use his players the wrong way. They know how to come forward much more than how to contain. That's why it wasn't a particularly entertaining game to watch. But at least from our point of view it showed our men could play intelligent football and that they are maturing. It was a team victory."

Despite the euphoria of the moment, Bearzot refused to lose his sense of priorities. While everyone else was talking about ensuring qualification at Wembley next autumn, he warned: "Wembley is not important now. There will be enough time to think about Wembley later.

"Finland are the most important opponents for us now. They are our next target."

Over-confidence

The biggest danger for Italy, as Bearzot realises, is over-confidence. But at least with a Juventus base — Cuccureddu, Gentile, Tardelli, Benetti, Causio and Bettega — they have an inbuilt understanding which England lack, particularly since Revie has chopped and changed ever since he took over.

Italy also have, in the statuesque Giacinto Facchetti, a remarkable figure of continuity. For it was in the days of Edmondo Fabbri as team manager that the Treviglio-born giant made his international debut in a 1-0 win over Turkey way back on March 27, 1963.

Facchetti had made his league debut for Internazionale — his only club — in May, 1960, at 18, but it wasn't until two years later that he became a regular for Helenio Herrera at left back. Then came his international start and since then Facchetti has missed just 12 internationals in 13 years. He has also won 90 caps, an Italian record, and a good 20 clear of nearest rival, Sandro Mazzola, his Inter colleague.

Not that this prestige has been of much service to Inter. Their fans are furious that Roberto Boninsegna was allowed to go to Juve in exchange for the ineffective Pietro Anastasi and with seven games played, they are eighth in the table averaging a point a game — and seven behind leaders Juve.

Inter president Ivanoe Fraizzoli is coming under more and more pressure, and the latest attack came from former Inter manager Herrera, now 60, who has just returned to soccer with second division strugglers, Rimini.

"Here is a club, Inter, who are falling lower and lower, all the time,' he said. "What can Fraizzoli expect to do, except resign soon? He must pay the penalty. If managers can be kicked out, so can presidents, especially when year after year they have been making mistakes — incredible mistakes.

"To sign Anastasi in exchange for Boninsegna and £50,000 was ridiculous. There were others as well. Three years ago I asked Fraizzoli to buy a striker — Paolino Pulici or Beppe Savoldi. Even if it cost £1 million, we had to have one or the other.

"Instead he bought men like Cerilli and Roselli, who could never fit in at Inter.

"Another recent example was the signing of Claudio Merlo from Fiorentina this past summer. No one wanted him in their team, not even Ugolino, president of Fiorentina. Fraizzoli saved him a great deal of embarrassment.

"Facchetti said the other day that he felt he could do a good job of leading the team as coach with me there to guide him. Giacinto is one of those who will be a good trainer. The idea of the two of us working together at Inter sounds good to me. But the day it comes around, Fraizzoli won't be there to see it."

Herrera resigned as Inter manager two years ago after a heart attack. The last few years have been difficult for him and there is as yet no sign of life easing up.

Herrera decided to quit management on the advice of doctors, and went into journalism, writing columns for various magazines from his Venice home. One, criticising the workings of the Settore Tecnico, the responsible organisation for coaches, landed him with a ban from management until December 31, 1976.

Not that this stopped Herrera saying yes, when Rimini president Gilberto Gaspari offered him the post of "adviser" over the head of coach Cesare Meucci.

The trainer, incensed, resigned — a decision which failed to perturb Herrera who, waiting for his ban to be lifted, looked forward to taking full charge from the start of January.

Rimini are bottom of the second division, having been promoted from *Serie C* only last season, and a small club. Herrera clearly sees them only as stepping stones back towards the top. At least he made a good start.

But while one famous name returns, another bows out — in this case Giacomo Bulgarelli, 36-year-old former Italy midfielder who spent 18 years playing for Bologna before retiring to a boardroom post 18 months ago.

Action man

Bulgarelli, who had also been a member of the council of the players' union, was clearly too much of an action man for his fellow directors. Trouble had been brewing for some time. Bulgarelli was upset when he retired that "no one here ever bothered to say thank you," and went off in a huff to play briefly in the United States.

President Luciano Conti recalled him — better late than never — and offered him a post as special counsellor, but Bulgarelli's role was never plainly defined, nor were his powers.

As he investigated the club he was disturbed by the lack of organisation in the youth set-up, which should be basic for a club such as Bologna who can't hope to match the big clubs in the transfer market.

The rest of the board, however, were not impressed by his reorganisation plans, and Giacomino felt he had no option but to walk out.

Bulgarelli, typically, refused to make any comment because "this might upset morale before the team's game with Milan," but Conti said: "The problem was that Bulgarelli had certain ideas — he wanted to do so much — and it just wasn't practical. If we had a magic wand I'd have done so many things like these long ago."

The following Sunday Bologna were held 2-2 at home by Milan, while Juventus were edging ahead at the top of the table, beating Verona 2-1 while champions Torino were frustrated 1-1 at Perugia.

Juve's win was not without incident, which could rebound on them later. A missile thrown from the crowd struck Verona's former Juve

ITALY SINCE THE 1974 WORLD CUP

1974
Sep 28 Zagreb 0-1 v Yugoslavia
Nove 20 Rotterdam 1-3 v Holland (EC)
Dec 29 Genoa 0-0 v Bulgaria

1975
Feb 19 Florence 4-1 v Norway
Apr 2 Rome 10-0 v United States
Apr 19 Rome 0-0 v Poland (EC)
Jun 5 Helsinki 1-0 v Finland (EC)
June 8 Moscow 0-1 v Russia
Sept 27 Rome 0-0 v Finland (EC)
Oct 26 Warsaw 0-0 v Poland (EC)
Nov 22 Rome 1-0 v Holland (EC)
Dec 30 Florence 3-2 v Greece

1976
Apr 7 Turin 3-1 v Portugal
May 23 Washington 4-0 v Team America (BIT'ment)
May 28 New York 2-3 v England (BIT'ment)
May 31 New Haven 1-4 v Brazil (BIT'ment)
Jun 5 Milan 4-2 v Rumania
Sep 22 Copenhagen 1-0 v Denmark
Sept 25 Rome 3-0 v Yugoslavia
Oct 16 Luxembourg 4-1 v Luxembourg (WC)
Nov 17 Rome 2-0 v England (WC)

Played 21 — Won 12 — Drawn 4 — Lost 5 — Goals for 44 — Against 19

ITALIAN ALL-TIME INTERNATIONAL APPEARANCES
* — still playing

90—Giacinto Facchetti (Inter)*
70—Sandro Mazzola (Inter)*
66—Tarcisio Burgnich (Juventus/Inter/Napoli)*
60—Gianni Rivera (Milan)*
59—Umberto Caligaris (Juventus)
54—Dino Zoff (Napoli/Juventus)*
53—Giuseppe Meazza (Ambrosiana-Inter)
52—Virginio Rosetta (Pro Vercelli/Juventus)
47—Adolfo Baloncieri (Alessandria/Torino)
—Gianpiero Combi (Juventus)
44—Giovanni Ferrari (Alessandria/Juventus/Ambrosiana-Inter)
43—Renzo de Vecchi (Milan/Genoa)
42—Luigi Riva (Cagliari)*
38—Giampiero Boniperti (Juventus)
37—Roberto Rosato (Torino/Milan)*
36—Sandro Salvadore (Milan/Juventus)
35—Eraldo Monzeglio (Bologna/Roma)
—Raimundo Orsi (Juventus)
34—Enrico Albertosi (Fiorentina/Cagliari/Milan)*
—Silvio Piola (Lazio/Juventus/Novara)

ITALY (1) 2

	Age	Caps
ZOFF	34	54
CUCCUREDDU	27	2
GENTILE	23	6
FACCHETTI	34	90
TARDELLI	22	8
BENETTI	30	31
ANTOGNONI	22	18
CAPELLO	30	31
CAUSIO	27	25
GRAZIANI	24	13
BETTEGA	26	8

Goals: Antognoni 36, Bettega 77

ENGLAND 0

	Age	Caps
CLEMENCE	28	24
CLEMENT	28	4
MCFARLAND	28	28
HUGHES	29	41
MILLS	27	10
GREENHOFF	23	5
CHERRY	28	6
BROOKING	28	15
KEEGAN	25	26
BOWLES	28	4
CHANNON	27	38

Sub.: BEATTIE (for Clement 80)

striker, Gianfranco Zigoni, as the teams went off at half-time and he was slightly concussed and had to be substituted.

Torino have their own troubles still, with the sad death of 37-year-old assistant coach Giogio Ferrini overshadowing the UEFA punishments imposed after the Düsseldorf scandal with Borussia Moenchengladbach.

Ferrini, who had been seriously ill for two months after a brain haemorrhage, was an iron-tackling midfielder who captained Torino to the Italian Cup in 1971 and made more than 400 league appearances between 1958 and 1975. He won seven caps for Italy, including an appearance in that infamous World Cup tie with Chile in the 1962 World Cup Finals.

Perhaps the best tribute came from Enzo Bearzot, his predecessor as Torino captain: "Ferrini was in the youth teams when I was a first-teamer and whenever we played our reserves it was clear here was one man who would never understand what a 'friendly' game was. He was a great player to have in your team."

Almost exactly a week after Ferrini's death, Torino heard UEFA's verdict on the 0-0 Champions' Cup second leg with Borussia. First came a massive £30,000 fine — about equivalent to that inflicted on Atletico Madrid after their 1974 tangle with Celtic.

Then came the player punishments. Goalkeeper Luciano Castellini is banned for four European competition games, midfielder Renato Zaccarelli for three, sweeper Vittorio Caporale for two and forward Salvatore Garritano for one.

President Orfeo Pianelli, on a business trip in Kenya at the time, was staggered. So was FA president Franco Carraro. What worried them most was that new Italian currency restrictions might mean Torino would have difficulty actually paying the fine outside the country and land in more hot water!

At least in the League Torino maintained their pursuit of Juventus with a useful 2-1 win over Napoli which dropped Bruno Pesaola's team from third to fourth, allowing the improved Lazio to move up after their 1-0 derby win over Roma.

Interestingly, there was more trouble for the police at this game than at the Italy-England match in the same Stadio Olimpico. Some 60 fans were arrested for acts of hooliganism. The worst incident was on a bus bound for the stadium, where a group of fans pushed the conductor out of a window.

At the same time Juve were keeping up their seven-game 100 per cent record by beating Cesena thanks to a Boninsegna goal. Cesena, who surprisingly preferred the untried (and cheaper) Tom Rosati as new trainer rather than Cesare Maldini, did more of the attacking in front of their own fans, forcing eight corners to Juve's four, but rarely provided any serious threat to Dino Zoff.

Mention of Maldini brings us on to another struggling *Serie A* club, Foggia. The league have just ordered them to pay him £8,000 due under the contract he had there last season!

Foggia are 12th in the 16-club division, having resurrected 35-year-old Angelo Domenghini, former Atalanta, Inter and Cagliari star to try to help them stay up.

Domenghini has now played 367 league games altogether — 335 in *Serie A* – and in addition has won 33 caps. For two years after being rejected by Fernaccio Valcareggi at Verona he wandered from specialist to specialist trying to sort out a troublesome leg injury, and the only offers he received were from two teams in the part-time third division.

That only made Domingo all the more determined to fight back, to show Valcareggi he wasn't finished, and to try to blot out the memory of bitter months spent under the shadow of a society scandal with which he always vehemently denied any link.

His career now seems to have picked up, which is more than can be said for former Cagliari colleague Gigi Riva. Italy's international record scorer has yet to come to grips with life in *Serie B* – or life as a member of the board.

Like Bulgarelli, he is finding plenty of frustrations in his new role, and he has the added problem of injuries which mean he has yet to kick a ball in anger this season.

Newcomers for Brazil

BRAZIL was due to start preparations for World Cup qualifying matches in February and March against Paraguay and Colombia with a friendly against the Soviet Union in Rio's Maracana stadium on December 1.

But the match was unlikely to produce a worthwhile pointer to Brazil's potential as manager Osvaldo Brandau said he will not choose players from clubs still in the Brazilian championship. This rules out 18 top clubs, so Brandao will probably try out some newcomers who showed up well in the early stages of the national championship.

Brandao will pick a squad of about 40 players to prepare for the World Cup games after the match and they were expected to play further games against Yugoslavia, East Germany and Bulgaria in January. He will have as one of his assistants former World Cup star Pele who however believes that "it will be almost impossible to beat Argentina on their home ground" and he considers them favourites for the Cup.

● TICKETS for the World Cup finals in Argentina will not be available at stadiums where matches are played. General Antonio Merlo, head of the organising committee said that as a security measure for the public they would only be available at banks and public offices while foreigners will also be able to buy them in their own country before coming here. He said that "Only people with tickets in their hands will be able to get to within three blocks of the stadium."

General Merlo also gave the latest percentages of work progress at the three new stadiums being built (in October). That at Mar del Plata was 49% completed, at Cordoba 45% and Mandoza 39%.

In an interview in Rio de Janeiro, General Merlo said that it is estimated that by the middle of 1977 terrorists will have been exterminated in Argentina, when asked about the security the country can offer to visiting teams, officials and tourists. "One can't say exactly what will happen by 1978, but nor can one assure this in Brazil, Spain or anywhere else," he told newsmen. He added that most tourists are expected from Brazil and that is why the Brazilian team will stay at the Mar del Plate seaside resort which has the largest tourist capacity.

ANOTHER CRISIS HITS URUGUAY

URUGUAYAN SOCCER is in the midst of another crisis following the resignation of FA president Carlos Queralto who was not satisfied with the collaboration he was getting.

This was followed by the resignation of the entire board. A solution was made more difficult at press time as referees, accused by players and officials of "fixing" matches, started to accuse each other and intended not to control games.

The major league, with the top eight first round teams playing on in the second round, had five matches to go and Nacional had a five point lead over Uruguay's other big team, Peñarol, who had been suffering more from the absence on tour of their international players for several weeks, although both had about half their team away.

The season's First Division champions, Defensor, the little club which became the first to break the Peñarol-Nacional monopoly of the title since 1931, are out of the running ten points behind the leaders.

CHILE

CHILE'S EVERTON, from Viña del Mar, and champions Union Española, who have carried on a close fight for the title most of the season, had 52 and 51 points respectively with one match to go, while third placed Colo Colo was way behind on 44.

La Serena was one of the teams doomed to relegation. The champions automatically qualify for next season's Libertadores Cup, while the second cup place goes to the winner of a playoff between the four teams placed second to fifth.

Likewise, while the two bottom teams are automatically relegated (to be replaced by the two Second Division leaders), the 16th and 17th go into a playoff with the third and fourth in the Second Division from which the best two remain in the First Division. It may be a bit complicated, but it produces tension and draws the crowds.

PERU

SPORT BOYS took over first place in the close Peruvian championship.

Four clubs are within three points of each other — Sport Boys 31, Juan Aurich 30, Union Huaral 29, Universitario 28 — with seven matches to go.

ECUADOR

NACIONAL DE QUITO won the "Finalizacion" championship in Ecuador after also winning the opening championship.

The first three from each tournament qualify for the championship final round, but there was only one change in the top three this time so that there will be four teams in the finals. According to the rules, teams are awarded three, two and one point start for their final placing in each tournament so that Nacional starts the final round with six points and Emelec (Guayaquil), Liga Deportiva Universitaria (Quito) and Deportivo Cuenca two each.

COLOMBIA

IN COLOMBIA, Deportivo Cali, Nacional and Millionarios shared top place with 26 points from 20 matches at the end of the extremely close "Finalizacion" championship, but Cali took the title with most games won (11) followed by Nacional (10).

These two, the top two in the "Abertura" tournament, the "Finalización" section B winners (Quindio) and the club to gain the next highest total points in both tournaments entered the championship final round for which the line-up is Nacional, Junior, Deportivo Cali, Millionarios, Caldas and Quindio. Last year's champions, Independiente Santa Fe, didn't make it.

Cruzeiro out

LIBERTADORES CUP holders Cruzeiro (last year's national champions) — who were due to face European Cup holders Bayern Munich for the "club world title" at press time — have been eliminated from this year's Brazilian national championship in which 18 of the original 54 clubs are now playing in two sections.

The top two from each section will then go into the final round and Internacional Porto Alegre, last year's runners up, and Cruzeiro's main state league rivals Atletico Bello Horizonte were topping the two tables at the halfway stage.

Other clubs which failed to qualify for this stage of the championship complain that the system has left them with no fixtures for three months and is threatening to bankrupt them, but even clubs still in the tournament face acute financial difficulties, because gates are not too good and travelling expenses high.

Rio club Flamengo, still with a faint hope of entering the semi-finals, has such big debts that 83% of their share of home gates go straight to a bank which has underwritten them. On top of that they have bought Osni, who, many Brazilian fans say, could be another Pele, for the equivalent of 125,000 dollars from Bahia's Victoria, but he has had a series of injuries and hasn't yet played for them in four months.

Meanwhile Sao Paulo, which has six clubs in the last 18, is in trouble with referees. The Sao Paulo Federation tried to ban a referee who, it claimed, had been unfair to one of its clubs. Then another referee claimed that Federation officials tried to intimidate him before a recent match involving a Sao Paulo club. The charge is being investigated.

BOCA TRIUMPH

News from South America by Eric Weil

BOCA JUNIORS beat River Plate (2-0) for the first time this season in five meetings between the two classic rivals of Argentine soccer. It was the 109th league meeting between the two since the start of professional soccer here in 1931 and it put them one ahead in the series with 41 wins to River Plate's 40 (the other 28 matches were drawn) and statistics were about the only thing to quote about this game.

As frequently happens, the match was poor in relation to the capacity of the two teams. Boca used their usual counter attack strategy, but River expected it and checked it. This resulted in a lot of midfield play — a lot of it dirty.

After Boca's first goal just after half-time, River tried to attack more, but only showed up their weakness up front — even during 30 minutes when they had a man more (Ribolzi was sent off). They found Boca's defence up to anything they could throw at it. Pelman seemed to take the ball over the line before he scored Boca's second 15 minutes from the end — J. Lopez was sent off for protesting it — but overall Boca's victory was deserved.

Respective

The result left both teams topping their respective sections in the national championship — Boca jointly with Quilmes in section A and River Plate a point ahead of Banfield in section B. Boca Juniors, the season's First Division champions continue to live dangerously as they frequently score vital goals near the end, but they lost 1-0 to Quilmes when the latter fooled their defence with the old free kick trick — one player running up to take it, but another actually kicking the ball in a different direction.

River Plate, the defending national champions, maintained their unbeaten record longest — for eight games — before it finally went 3-1 to Banfield. But all is not well at River Plate (as mentioned in last month's *World Soccer*) and the club is negotiating for the services of their former centre forward star, Alfredo Di Stefano to take over as coach next season from Angel Labruna, another former River Plate international who is being blamed for most of the unrest among the playing staff.

Talleres Cordoba, the strongest non First Division provincial club in the championship, had won eight games in a row at press time and they now lead section D by a point after a poor start, while Independiente, now coached by their former midfield star, Omar Pastoriza, are also improved and are back in contention for a final playoff place — the top two from each section qualify — after taking nine points from their last five games.

Huracan's Saldano, their expensive pre-national championship buy (from Colon) and leading scorer heads for goal against Mendoza's San Martin. This was one of the many national championship games which drew small crowds in Buenos Aires.

MARINER MIS BY MANY SCO

Thoughts on soccer by Brian Glanville

THERE IS always the possibility, previously alluded to in these columns, that the trouble with our football may be the people who run it. The thought was very much with me when, within the space of a few days, recently, I was informed by the coach of a First Division club that he would never have Trevor Brooking in his side — a few days later Brooking magisterially won the match for West Ham United at Old Trafford — and Paul Mariner, with a splendid display at Middlesbrough, ridiculed all those scouts and managers who had ignored him when he was a teenager.

There are good scouts — I mean it in the footballing, rather than the Victorian, sense — as well as good coaches, and it must not be thought that I am attempting to condemn either breed out of hand. Nevertheless, the story of Mariner — with which I intended to link the story of Francesco Graziani — shows that there must be some pretty inept scouts around, too.

Mariner, as we know, joined Ipswich Town in October from Plymouth Argyle for the equivalent of £200,000, in money and human flesh. You might legitimately have wondered why a young Lancastrian should have made his name with Plymouth, in the far West Country, at all. In fact no Lancashire League club signed Mariner, who was, five years or so ago, a spindly midfield player. "I never had any contact with any League club except Bolton," he has said, "and that was as a supporter on the terraces."

So he went to Chorley, then in the Northern Premier, later in the Cheshire League, where he played without any great success in midfield until the manager, Alan Hampson, had the shrewd and profitable idea of switching him to centre-forward. Now read on.

You may talk if you wish about late developers, but given the concentration of League clubs in the Lancashire area, given the fact that so many youngsters are taken on, if not as apprentice pros, then as least as registered schoolboys, it seems astonishing, unless you are as sceptical as I am about such things, that not a single club should ever approach Mariner. Not even to give him a trial and then reject him.

Yet in case you think such benighted things can happen only in this country, let me give you the example of Graziani. The Torino and Italy centre-forward, who really does want to come to play for Liverpool or Manchester United, and asked me with astonishment in Rome whether it were true that English footballers were paid for giving interviews, was born in a little town South of Rome, but played his junior football in Rome itself.

Neither Roma nor Lazio showed any interest in him, and eventually he moved from a little local club to Arezzo, the obscure Tuscan club. It was there that Torino found him, and with Torino, as we know, he has had an immensely successful career. When I spoke to him in Milan just before the England v. Italy game in Rome, Sandro Mazzola told me he thought Graziani the best centre-forward in the world.

Italian goalkeeper Zoff punches clear as England attack in Rome.

SSED OUTS

The subject of payment for players' interviews arose, during the period of the England-Italy game, because Kevin Keegan allegedly kept asking for payment whenever he was approached by an Italian journalist; a fact which the Italian journalists invariably and diligently recorded. Keegan asked them to fix a price with his agent; the journalists, used to talking to their own players for nothing, found the price demanded excessive. When, by contrast, Bobby Charlton gave an interview to one of them in England, they found the price, by comparison with Keegan's, not unreasonable.

The debate quickly gained momentum. Even Sergio Campana, the lawyer and former League footballer who is head of the Italian Players' Union entered with a habitual, rhetorical flourish; in an ideal situation, he mysteriously averred, in which footballers were genuinely free, they would be permitted to ask payment for interviews. The implication seemed to be that in the present situation, even were they able to demand money, they would not be able to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Interviews

I cannot say that I find Keegan's attitude to the Italians an endearing one, though I must emphasise immediately that I myself have never been asked for a penny by him or any other England player. Before condemning him out of hand, moreover, let us remember that Johan Cruyff demands immense sums of money to be interviewed, not only on the television but by weekly magazines and the like.

When, last summer, I was making the Thames TV documentary *SOCCER: A DECADE OF CHANGE*, Thames were asked, not by Cruyff but by his controversial father-in-law-cum-agent, Cor Coster, for the sum of £1,000 for a few minutes' interview.

It was obviously out of the question to pay, nor would it have been remotely worth it. Yet even in Cruyff's case, I must emphasise that I have interviewed him many times, as a journalist, received the most admirable co-operation, and never been asked for money.

Franz Beckenbauer, by contrast, not only agreed to be interviewed in Munich for a fairly modest fee, but insisted on giving it to a British charity — the PFA's benevolent fund, as it transpired — and on paying for lunch for the whole of the television crew, at the Grunwald Sports Centre!

Perhaps the most relevant, if implicit, comment on the whole business was made when Keegan, during a home match against Bristol City in November, wanted to be substituted after an hour because, he said, he was worried by business problems which had assailed him during the week. Bob Paisley, his manager, said laconically that Keegan would have to learn to live with such things, which seemed both irrelevant and unhelpful, since Keegan had quite clearly failed to live with such things.

Ten days earlier, Keegan, after all the trumpeting of Enzo Bearzot and the Italian Press, had played a mediocre game in Rome and, by bad luck in one case and a silly lapse in the other, been involved on the conceding of both Italian goals. Don't, the moral may be, bite off more than you can chew; but who is to stop you doing so?

Whatever one may say about Cruyff's exigent father in law, at least he does protect him from some of the pressures that afflict Keegan. Keegan himself has an agent, but it is clear that the agent has not been able to shield him from all his worries; though perhaps, as a good agent, he is responsible for 10 per cent of them.

If you can't take the heat, as the Americans say, get out of the kitchen. If Keegan does go to Spain, as everyone expects — and the story is that Real Madrid have already put £40,000 on Liverpool's table as an advance payment — he may well find the problem solved for him, to the extent that, as he says, Spanish clubs pay immensely more than they do here; and are far less indulgent about their players pursuing outside activities.

Yet here is Graziani wanting to play for . . . Liverpool. What can have come over the fellow? Yet he was palpably sincere when he asked me to help him, both before and after we took part in a television programme in Rome. I suppose if any English club can rustle together a mere nine hundred thousand pounds or so, the deal could be done. Graziani seemed curiously unconcerned by my warning that he would not earn remotely as much here as in Italy. Perhaps it is the prospect of being paid for interviews that he finds so alluring.

Turkey snatch point

TURKEY surprised East Germany, the Olympic Champions, by drawing 1-1 in Dresden. The Turks were given little chance in this World Cup qualifying round match but though the Germans scored first – with a penalty by Kotte in the third minute – they could not press home any advantage.

Turkey drew level with another penalty, put away by Cemil in the 31st minute, while East Germany grew more and more frustrated at their inability to score.

The home side hit the woodwork three times in the second half but Turkey kept their goal intact to take home a precious, and somewhat unexpected, point.

Eire team is a good one...

International Microscope

by Eric Batty

	P	W	D	L	Goals F	Goals A
Argentina	1	0	0	1	0	1
Austria	10	2	2	6	13	27
Belgium	8	4	1	3	19	18
Brazil	1	0	0	1	1	2
Chile	3	2	0	1	5	3
Czechoslovakia	9	2	1	6	9	24
Denmark	5	2	2	1	6	5
Ecuador	1	1	0	0	3	2
England	6	1	2	3	6	11
Finland	2	1	1	0	4	1
France	7	2	2	3	9	11
West Germany	10	4	1	5	16	19
Holland	5	3	0	2	12	11
Hungary	7	0	3	4	12	20
Iceland	2	1	1	0	5	3
Iran	1	1	0	0	2	1
Italy	4	0	0	4	2	10
Luxembourg	3	3	0	0	10	1
Norway	10	6	3	1	26	15
Poland	13	4	3	6	17	26
Portugal	5	1	0	4	3	9
Spain	15	3	3	9	12	36
Switzerland	7	4	0	3	8	4
Scotland	4	1	1	2	3	8
Sweden	6	1	1	4	7	14
Turkey	5	2	2	1	11	7
Uruguay	1	0	0	1	0	2
U.S.S.R.	4	1	0	3	5	5
Wales	1	0	0	1	2	3
Yugoslavia	1	0	0	1	1	4
Totals	152	49	29	74	217	292

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION of Ireland, otherwise known as Eire to distinguish it from the Irish FA, was not formed until 1921. Like several other countries — Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia for example — the Irish Free State was not formed until the twenties and the formation of their own FA was precipitated by several clubs breaking away from the Irish FA.

The FA of Ireland joined FIFA in 1924 but did not play their first international until another two years had passed. Then they travelled to Turin for a game with Italy — which they lost 0-3. Almost exactly a year later they played their second game, the return visit of Italy to Dublin . . . and again went down, this time by 2-1.

Belgium were Eire's first international victims whom they beat 4-2 at Liege in 1928. In those days the Republic fielded home grown teams with Shamrock Rovers providing the backbone of every side, and Shelbourne also prominent. Even today Shamrock Rovers have still provided more players for Eire than any other club, though with so many players from the Republic playing for English League clubs they are largely dependent now on the goodwill of English clubs releasing their players.

Common practice

Until quite recently, it was common practice for English clubs not to co-operate and I have seen several internationals at Dalymount Park . . . staged on Sundays, in which players from England took part after playing for their clubs the previous day.

Though the Republic has never yet qualified for the final stages of a World Cup they began to take part long before England and Scotland. Their first appearance was in the 1934 competition in which they were paired in qualifying matches with Belgium (drew 4-4 at home) and Holland (lost 2-5 away) and failed to qualify. Four years later in 1938 they failed again but by the most narrow of margins. Drawn to play Norway they lost 2-3 away and then could do no more than draw 3-3 at home and out they went once more.

In 1950 and 1954 they failed again as they did in 1958, though this time they held England to a 1-1 draw in Dublin but the closest they have come to qualifying so far was in the 1966 series. Then they were paired with Spain whom they beat 1-0, and with goals away not counting, earned a play-off in Paris despite losing 1-4 away. In Paris, however, they lost 0-1 to Spain and their dream ended once more.

In the current qualifying competition they had a real chance in many people's eyes, being paired with Bulgaria and France, neither of whom is anything outstanding. After a very impressive 1-1 draw against England at Wembley as a warm-up game they travelled to Paris recently and after a goal-less first half, finally lost 2-0. That result, which tragically stemmed from an error by Johnny Giles, their player manager who has done so much towards creating a solid and skilful Eire team, has made the path to Argentina an uphill one. But a home and away double over Bulgaria is not beyond them, and the return game against France if it is won well "could" see them through for the first time.

In fact, although most people regard the Hungarians as the first team to beat England on home soil, the Republic of Ireland achieved this four years earlier when they beat England 2-0 at Goodison Park in 1949.

Notable players

This was in the days then their right back Johnny Carey of Manchester United, as fine a full back as any could wish to see, captained the side. Other notable players worthy of note are Paddy Coad, an inside forward who was good enough to play as a professional but preferred to stay in Ireland, and Con Martin . . . the father of the present West Brom defender, Mick Martin. Con Martin was a defender too, but after going in goal in an emergency on one occasion, he was later chosen to play in goal which is almost a unique achievement at international level.

Current team manager, Johnny Giles, decided he was finished at international level but decided to make a come-back. After playing against England with great distinction, Turkey and France, he now has 47 caps, which is the equal of the Eire record, previously held by Alan Kelly, who was at one time the Preston North End goalkeeper.

The FAI awards a statuette to any player representing his country 25 times, and fittingly, it was Johnny Carey who was the first to receive this award in 1950. Since then, 15 other players have raised their tallies to 25 or more, the latest being Terry Conroy (Stoke City) and Mick Martin.

Though no awards are given for goalscoring, their current striker, Don Givens, of Queens Park Rangers, is their highest-ever scorer with a total of 15. This also includes the most goals in one game . . . all four in the 4-0 home win over Turkey in a European championship qualifying game in 1975.

Indeed, though World Cup qualification is still technically possible and Eire have a more than useful team right now, their one weakness is their over-dependence on Givens to score goals. He had the chance to cover himself with glory when he was put clear against England with the score at 1-1 but failed, and if Eire are to win their uphill battle and qualify for Argentina it seems clear that it will be Givens who does most of the scoring. With him in form for the key games with France and Bulgaria, his finishing power could turn a very useful side into a dangerous one and it will be a great day for the Irish if they make it, particularly now with their old enemy, England, facing an even more difficult task.

QUESTION....and....ANSWER

Ken Goldman Keith Burkinshaw

Attractive -winning football!

Q. What do you consider are your most difficult problems and main aims at the Club?

A. To produce a team that plays attractive and winning football whilst at the same time pleasing the spectators. I regard pleasing the public as extremely important and too often people in football tend to lose sight of this especially when a team is playing away from home.

Q. Do you consider that British Players are skilful enough?

A. Like many others in the game I do not think that British teams are good enough on their skill and techniques and we must work harder to improve them. Skills are acquired early in life say between 5 and 15 years of age and the really skilful players build up their ability during those years and polish it up as they grow older and play for professional sides.

Q. How do you think Managers can bring some more excitement into the game?

A. When I go to watch matches as a spectator I am not excited normally because not enough happens in the goal areas at both ends of the field. We must, therefore, try to produce excitement in games by attempts at goal and the development of patterns of play which allow players with a flair to come through.

Q. Do you think ball players should have as high a work-rate as more pedestrian players?

A. I believe youngsters do not devote enough time to developing their skill and I think that the skills and techniques should be the number one priority. I am, therefore, a great believer in skilful players being allowed to play but I would emphasise that I consider skilful players should play and work as hard as the less skilful ones.

Q. Do you think a Manager must delegate responsibility?

A. A Manager in this day and age has a great need to delegate because there are so many aspects to the running of a professional football club that to ensure 100 per cent organisation it is impractical not to do this. The secret is to obtain people who do the job quickly and effectively. Furthermore, it is important that the whole staff are 100 per cent behind every decision coming out of the Manager's office and there will be no success on the field where the situation exists that the staff are divided.

Q. What are you looking for in players?

A. The best players have marvellous balance and are so difficult to dispossess. They control well, pass accurately and finish lethally. If we can develop this in our players as for instance the West Germans have done we will bring back to the game some of the thrills and excitement I have previously mentioned.

Q. What are your views on today's Referees?

A. There is too much criticism of referees and far too many people say too much about them but do nothing to help. I have tried and will continue to do so to further links between referees and football clubs. The end must be to see how referees think and to get them to see how we think. That way some progress can be made to reducing dissent and getting more uniformity of decisions.

ACCENT ON SKILL

Paul Gardner—continued from page 13

talking about perfection here. But there's certainly one thing that looking at German and Brazilian football convinced me of, if I hadn't been convinced of it before. This is a game that should be played on the ground: it's more effective, it's more skilful, and I think it's more attractive.

"I saw three English league games, and I kept a record: do you know the average number of passes put together before the ball was either shot at goal or — more likely! — lost? Three. I did the same for the German games I saw — their average was 10 passes. And most of the English moves broke down because they tried the long ball."

Does that mean we may be seeing some German players on the Cosmos next year? The slightest of pauses — "That's a possibility — but what we will do is what I thought we were doing rather well at the end of this past season. We'll be playing primarily a ground game, an attacking game, with the accent on skill".

Crucial

Would it be putting it too strongly to say that the Cosmos have to win the championship next season? "We have to win, it's crucial. And apart from anything else, I want to win it for one man. For Pele. He's done a wonderful job here. He deserves to go out as a champion."

Yet Gordon Bradley's last thoughts, his biggest smile, his happiest expression, revolve around something else. He traces the brief history of the Cosmos! "We started in 1971 with players from the local German-American League. In 1972 we got English 3rd and 4th division players. In '73 and '74 we got better 3rd division players, some 2nd division. In 1975 we had first division Uruguayans — unfortunately they didn't settle in here. In 1976 we got First division players like Keith Eddy, Dave Clements — and of course Pelé and Chinaglia. In 1977 perhaps we're ready to get younger first division players. But you know what would make me happiest? Starting that team of 10 year olds."

As I leave, I notice standing against the office wall, a sturdy-looking suitcase, labelled and packed. Within six hours Gordon Bradley will be off to Europe again.

News from SPAIN by Keir Radnedge

WHAT'S AT RE

TO HOLD sixth place in the first division would please the fans of most clubs in most leagues throughout the world.

But it's not good enough for those of Real Madrid, and the big question in Spain right now is: What's wrong there?

At the end of October they scored a praiseworthy 2-0 win over championship rivals Valencia, but then came one setback after another and quickly pressure built up on coach Miljan Miljanic.

First, Madrid went down 2-0 to Celta de Vigo. This was followed by a 2-2 home draw with Real Sociedad and then came a 4-1 thrashing by Espanol Barcelona, coached by former Madrid stopper Jose Santamaria.

Amid those disappointments came elimination from the Champions' Cup by Brugge. But what hurt more than even the results was the worrying fact that after a series of brilliant displays in the pre-season tournaments, Madrid have never approached anything like form in the league.

One of Miljanic's most voluble critics has been a former Madrid director, Felix Fernandez.

Wrong man

"This is typical of what happens to so many of our clubs," he said. "They think that anyone from outside must be The Best — and it just isn't so. Our trainers in Spain are better than the foreigners we get. But they don't have enough chance to work.

"Madrid's problems have arisen because of Miljanic. Not that he's a bad coach. Just that he was the wrong man for Madrid.

"If I had my way, I'd give the job to Antonio Ruiz (Miljanic's assistant)."

Another of Miljanic's critics is Ferdinand Dieguez, president of the association of friends of Real Madrid.

"I've nothing against Miljanic personally," he said. "But I think he is trying to operate within limitations which don't give him a chance. The Madrid squad is just not good enough to compete in top European competitions — though I admit there have been injury problems.

"Not that I accept that as a complete excuse. Miljanic was, after all, given *carte blanche* to sign all the players he needed. Now only drastic remedies will be enough. . . ."

But Miljanic has plenty of defenders — including former Madrid coach Miguel Munoz who, like Marcos Marquitos, fellow defender in the great team of the late fifties, thinks Madrid will recover to win the league for the 18th time.

"They're not playing well," said Marquitos, "but they'll still win the title."

President Santiago Bernabeu couldn't stay silent either.

"When I took on this post 34 years ago, people said I wasn't up to it. I told them: Wait and see. I said the same when they criticised me for wanting to build a big new stadium. My attitude remains the same today."

Improvement

Miljanic remained calm, saying that if Madrid were going through a bad patch it was only because of injuries. But there is little sign yet of an improvement.

Madrid went to Belgium for the 2-0 second leg defeat by Brugge without skipper Pirri and came back resigned to being at least a month without stopper Gregorio Benito. Then, in the 2-2 draw with Real Sociedad — live TV kept the crowd down to 25,000 — both Jose Camacho and the Dane, Henning Jensen, were injured. Jensen will need a minor leg operation.

Midfielders Manolo Velazquez and Vicente del Bosque have also been sidelined and against Real Sociedad, Madrid had to use normal right back Juan Sol as stopper with Alberto Vitoria as sweeper.

Young Vitoria, expected to hold down a midfield place for many seasons to come, struggled and his loss of confidence is a worrying sight in itself.

One of the criticisms of Miljanic is that he has been unenterprising in the transfer market. But at least Madrid seem to be putting that right. After denying a French report that they wanted Nancy free kick specialist Michel Platini, they moved in to agree a £300,000 fee for Burgos' international right winger, Alberto Juanito.

Yet, even here Madrid nearly missed the boat. Six months ago they were rebuffed in their attempts to sign the ex-Atletico Madrid 25-year-old and early in November it seemed Barcelona were about to take advantage.

CFB went to Burgos with an offer of £500,000 for Juanito and goalkeeper Fernandez Manzanedo. While Burgos president Antonio Martinez Laredo was thinking it over, Juanito was asked which club he *really* preferred — Madrid or Barcelona?

His reply was candid in the extreme — "The one who will pay me the most!"

In the middle of negotiations Burgos went to play in Barcelona, losing 3-0 in a match of which Juanito, though he played well, won't have happy memories since the CFB jeered him constantly, remembering his platitudes about Madrid in the summer when he was first set to move.

Three days later Barcelona said they weren't interested — the deal was off. "They were just playing games with me," complained Juanito, bitterly upset. But not for long.

Three more days and Martinez Laredo was announcing: "We have agreed terms with Real Madrid. Juanito will sign as soon as possible and join their squad at the end of the season." From the depths of despair the player was now over the moon.

"It's certain this time," he said. "I'm going to the best club in the world."

Incidentally, going back to that Burgos debacle in Barcelona, all three goals that Sunday were scored by Manuel Clares, the Madrid-born former Castellon spearhead who had always been a favourite of coach Rinus Michels, but barely had a look-in during Hennes Weisweiler's ten-month reign.

Clares has often been dismissed as slow and clumsy, but there was nothing awkward about the way he took his goals in the 21st, 34th and 89th minutes. The first came from the penalty spot after a bad foul by Ruiz Igartua spoiled a magical dribble by Johan Cruyff.

His fellow Dutchman, Johan Neeskens, had previously taken all CFB's penalties since arriving from Ajax in the summer of 1974. But this season Neeskens has lost the sharp edge off his play and missed penalties against Salamanca and Hercules.

Clares gave him a chance to redeem himself in the 67th minute of the game with Burgos,

MIGUEL ANGEL BRINDISI has at last confirmed that he *did* sign for Juventus two years ago, after the 1974 World Cup. But the Argentinian midfielder now with Las Palmas added: "They had to cancel the contract when it became clear their FA wouldn't let any more foreigners in."

* * *

CARLOS ALBERTO FENOY, another Argentino, is the most popular player with Celta de Vigo fans. As goalkeeper he has been responsible for one of the first division's best defensive records — nine goals in 11 games. But, as penalty taker, he is also top scorer — with four to his credit.

* * *

A PICTURESQUE scene, one fan called it, as Real Madrid's Velazquez and Real Sociedad's Murillo shook hands as captains before the league match. The comment was a bad pun, of course — Velazquez and Murillo also happen to have been the names of two of Spain's greatest painters.

GONE WRONG
EAL MADRID?

when CFB were awarded another spot kick, with Cruyff again the *agent provocateur*.

Neeskens, having been handed the ball with great ceremony by Clares, shot hard, but virtually straight at Manzanedo. Clares put the rebound into the net, but the referee disallowed the "goal" because of a foul on the goalkeeper.

But, in contrast to Neeskens, Cruyff showed top form as Barcelona stayed within a point of leaders Atletico Madrid, and belied a sarcastic comment from West Germany from Weisweiler that: "Barcelona won't win anything while they have Cruyff in the team."

Barcelona can do without attacks from outside. They have enough internal troubles. Four directors resigned after claiming they were insulted by Joaquin Rife, the former international winger turned full back, who is now Michels's right-hand man.

Rife became involved in a shouting match with the four after an earlier 1-1 draw at home to Hercules, when they attempted to enter the dressing rooms to "express their disappointment" at the result.

They were forestalled when Cruyff locked the door in their faces, leaving Rife to face the music.

The upshot was the mass resignation, which prompted president Agustin Montal — not for the first time — to hint that he might stand down at the next elections. Whether he will or not when the time comes is another matter.

Solvent

But Barcelona are facing another, different sort of challenge, too — from their neighbours, Espanol. Both clubs reached the third round of the UEFA Cup and Espanol are in the league top five after their 4-1 win over Madrid.

All the more remarkable then, that they have done so well, since they are without Daniel Solsona, their best forward, who hasn't played since contracting a serious illness in the summer.

Espanol have always been CFB's poor relations in terms of success and cash, and several times in the past few years have remained solvent only thanks to the sale of a star.

This past summer was no exception (defender Ramos went to CFB) and lately injury has troubled Chilean striker Carlos Caszely. Coach Santamaria owes success, therefore, to an unlikely trio of Paraguayans.

The most experienced is the big 27-year-old sweeper, Roberto Ortiz Aquino, who has also been captaining Espanol. He reads a game well, provides excellent cover for former Madrid stopper Pedro de Felipe, and is adept at launching counter attacks with his shrewd passes forward.

The second Paraguayan is new goalkeeper Roberto Fernandez, called the Cat. He earned the nickname from saving two Fernando Morena penalties in his one international — against Uruguay — and made his Spanish debut as substitute for the injured Echevarria in the last half-hour of a league match with Atletico Madrid.

Fernandez, who is 22, admits that adjusting to the European game — more shots to deal with, especially from outside the box, and many more high crosses than is usual in South America — has been difficult.

Imports

But when he saved a penalty from Pirri in the win over Madrid he made it clear that he is settling quickly. This could hardly have been said, though, for Paraguayan No. 3, Roberto Cino, one of the first imports when the frontiers were reopened four years ago.

For most of that time he has sat everything out on the substitutes' bench, but finally this season injuries forced Santamaria to call him in for a home match with Las Palmas.

After 25 minutes Espanol were awarded a penalty and Ortiz Aquino, who normally takes them, threw the ball to Cino. He ran forward, belted the ball past Daniel Carnevali, and kept on running into the embraces of the delighted fans. They were even more pleased three quarters of an hour later when Cino made the game safe with a neat header from Jose Marianin's cross.

Next week Cino scored again in a 2-2 draw at Santander, and yet another in the win over Madrid. What will Santamaria do when he has everyone fully fit?

The same day Espanol were drawing at Santander, Atletico Madrid were wasting a chance to increase their one-point lead at the top when they went down 1-0 to Betis in Seville in a rough game which finished with a fracas on the pitch involving a number of Betis fans and Atletico defenders Jose Capon and Ramon Heredia.

There was trouble, too, of a different kind, at Bilbao, where the home club beat Zaragoza 3-1 while Chechu Rojo (Bilbao) and India (Zaragoza) were sent off and four more players shown the yellow card.

Zaragoza have problems a-plenty, above all with centre forward Nino Arrua, another Paraguayan. He was Spain's top scorer two seasons ago, but in the past 18 months had become more and more difficult to handle.

First he was troubled by injuries, then he wanted a transfer, then he decided to stay. Then he wanted to go home to Paraguay. Then he took out dual nationality. Then he decided that since his great friend Carlos Diarte had gone to Valencia, he wanted away, too. A few weeks later he said he'd decided to stay.

SALIF KEITA, former Valencia star now topping the Portuguese scoring charts with Sporting Lisbon, had some home truths for Spanish soccer recently.

"Spain is a country with a people passionately concerned about the game,' he said. "But sadly this enthusiasm doesn't make itself felt in a positive way in a league where standards are going down and down.

"Few clubs seem seriously prepared to bother with youngsters, and so there are no more great footballers coming through. The national team has few outstanding men either — apart from Pirri, and he's not so far off retirement.

"The refereeing is sometimes scandalous, the man-to-man marking brutal, and off the field there are far too many boardroom rows.

What makes you think he wasn't happy there?

. . .

GUNTER NETZER had no doubts either, when asked whose players were the hardest in Europe. No, not Britain's but Spain's defenders. Netzer said in the same interview that on leaving Madrid he received offers from New York Cosmos, five West German teams, four French and one from Holland, as well as Grasshoppers Zurich (whom he joined).

Hardly a week seemed to go by without Arrua changing his mind. At first he warmly welcomed former Benfica forward Jordao, then the two men started arguing and Arrua ignored his new team-mate out on the pitch.

Finally, the last straw, Arrau ran into difficulties with a couple of his business concerns.

Coach Lucien Muller sent him home from training and the board suspended him for a week. Arrua's reaction was to apologise for all the trouble caused and promise to settle down. We shall see. But Zaragoza are badly in need of his adroit skills in the penalty box.

Two-year

They need to strengthen defence too, but they've missed out on Josef Horvath, the former Ujpest defender, who fled to Switzerland with his family 18 months ago. Horvath signed there for Young Fellows of Zurich despite a two-year FIFA suspension, but now that his ban is soon to expire he wants to find a club.

He trained with Zaragoza for several months, but they couldn't agree cash terms, and now he seems likely to finish up in Holland with Feyenoord.

ABERDEEN GO FOR HAT-TRICK

THE FASTEST gums in the North undoubtedly belong to Aberdeen manager Ally MacLeod. There's absolutely no truth in the rumour that he can do 100 words per second by mouth, but there are those who might just believe it.

MacLeod is either loved or hated. He's been called Scotland's answer to Brian Clough. Others have just called him a loudmouth so-and-so. Personally I think the man is a breath of fresh air in an otherwise cobwebbed society. He does say some outrageous, ridiculous things, but you must admire him for his motivation of his players. He may be Muhammad Ali to the public, but his players respect him and see the other side of his character.

No one in Scotland has been allowed to forget for one second that Aberdeen won the League Cup this season when they defeated Celtic in the Final with an odd-looking goal in extra-time. The build-up by Arthur Graham was splendid, but Jocky Scott's cross wasn't hit properly, Joe Harper swung and missed and substitute Davie Robb just might have been offside as he nipped in to hit it into the net.

That was the winner that left Celtic looking despondent and bemused. They had blitzed the Aberdeen goalmouth throughout the second-half, but couldn't get the advantage they needed. On some occasions it looked as though World War III had broken out in that Dons penalty area. Bodies were flying everywhere and Bobby Clark looked like he was going through a nightmare.

Amazingly, nothing got past him. Paul Wilson was the main culprit. From two close-in chances he hit one against the post and screwed another wide of the upright. The Celtic fans groaned as Clark got in the way of a powerful drive from Ronnie Glavin and they sighed again when Danny McGrain burst through, but just missed.

I recall these facts not to say Aberdeen were lucky, but to remind everyone at Pittodrie — players and fans — that they are not supermen. Anyone passing through Aberdeen the Sunday after the Hampden victory would have been forgiven for thinking the Dons had just won the World Cup!

The celebrations are over. It's time to get back down to the job in hand and remember that the Premier League is the really big one. MacLeod's men were caught out in their next match against Hearts, who beat them 2-1 at Tynecastle. Their next two games at Pittodrie brought two victories against Ayr United and Hibs — both by one goal.

Let's have a look at this Aberdeen team. Are they as good as manager MacLeod says they are? Can they last the pace?

There's a no-nonsense look about the outfit and Celtic boss Jock Stein reckons they have one of the best squads in Scotland. Yet Aberdeen couldn't beat lowly English Second Division club Orient in the Anglo-Scottish Cup this season. In fact, they couldn't even score against them in 180 minutes of play. Why? I believe Aberdeen were left to do the dictating in both these games. Orient didn't take the play to them.

The English club were prepared to wait and strike on the breakaway — the same tactic MacLeod likes to use so much. The Dons were unsettled. They had to become the playmakers using the short ball from midfield through to attack. It wasn't successful. They couldn't get going. Admittedly, there could not have been much atmosphere, but, remember, it was the same for the Orient lads. They won 1-0 at Pittodrie and by the same scoreline in the second leg to go through on a 2-0 aggregate.

Purpose

If you restrict Aberdeen's use of the long ball you can nullify a lot of their danger and purpose. I'm not saying that simple tactic will flatten them altogether — they are far too good for that — but it will restrict them.

Their running off the ball is quite superb, but if the likes of Jocky Scott, Drew Jarvie and Joe Harper don't get the type of passes they like then they lose a lot of their lethal ability. I believe Arthur Graham is a key man in this team and he doesn't always get the praise he deserves. He's brave and willing to take the knocks. Although he is listed as a winger he can play with equal finesse in the middle of the park and he can tackle like a full-back.

Graham is an unselfish player. He is always looking for the ball and he can come back and retrieve it from a harassed defence, hold it until the break is on and then either release it or bring it forward himself. If Graham can be shadowed competently Aberdeen would again suffer. However, shadowing Graham is easier said than done. Even that wonderful full-back Danny McGrain will admit to that!

On the right hand side of the pitch Dominic Sullivan is employed to do the same sort of job, but although he has been far from a failure, he hasn't quite hit it off the same way Graham has. Mind you, that could come in time.

In the midfield MacLeod has former Falkirk man Jim Shirra. What does MacLeod think of Shirra? He says he is a combination of Archie Gemmill, Dave Mackay and Denis Law! It's quite remarkable to think that a player rated in such a way cost only £20,000 from a club where he was never sure of a first team game.

Actually, Shirra is a good worker and a brave player. He has a certain amount of skill, but the estimation is far too high. Also in the midfield we have Joe Smith, who not so long ago was the target for the boo-boys at Pittodrie. I like Smith's style, although he will never win any medals for his defensive ability. He likes to play, subtle through balls, yet he possesses this lazy ability of his brother Jimmy, the former Newcastle maestro. Football perhaps came easy to Joe. He has probably always had this supreme talent, but he has his flaws, too.

Centre-half Willie Garner is in the same mould as the man from whom he took over, Willie Young, who is now with Spurs, of course. He is good in the air and solid in the tackle and it depends upon how you play against him on how much success you will get.

Accuracy

I wouldn't stick a striker right up the centre of the field. That, I think, would be playing right into Garner's style. Perhaps a man feeding off him would be better. Garner doesn't bring the ball into attack. Like the other back-four men he likes to play it long, but obviously his accuracy is not all that a midfield man, for instance, would like his to be. Beside Garner there is skipper Willie Miller, a competent, composed player, but he can lose a bit of his class if he is put under direct pressure.

A skilful player with the ability to run at defences can put Aberdeen's rearguard under a lot of pressure. Where do you find a skilful player with that ability these days? They are certainly not in abundance. The Garner-Miller partnership reminds me of the Willie Young-Martin Buchan set-up at Pittodrie several years ago. Buchan was the man who made the twosome so profitable . . . and I believe Miller has taken that role these days. Take away Miller — and Garner might not be so effective.

At right-back we have Stewart Kennedy, another former Falkirk player. He is the man who is rated by MacLeod as his top buy. That's not a bad compliment when you consider Ally has bought Sullivan, Harper, Shirra and Ian Fleming (Kilmarnock) over the past year. I've always admired Kennedy's style of play and his on-the-field attitude.

I can remember a Scottish Cup-tie several years ago when Falkirk played Berwick Rangers at Shielfield. Falkirk were on dangerous ground apparently and everyone wanted to see if little Berwick could claim

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News from SCOTLAND by Alex Gordon

another First Division scalp just like they had done a couple of years before hand when they defeated the mighty Rangers.

Falkirk were right in trouble when Ian Whitehead — oddly, a former Ayr player under Ally MacLeod — put Berwick ahead with a close-in header. In that Falkirk team that day were experienced campaigners such as defender John Markie and ex-Rangers attacker Alex Ferguson, the man who is doing such a good job these days as manager of St. Mirren.

But it wasn't these players who decided to get a grip of the situation — it was Kennedy. He started to bring composure to a ragged-looking rearguard and then he started adding his weight to the attack. He made several good runs down the right and eventually Berwick started to fade. From two crosses from the overworked right-wing Falkirk scored twice before the interval and they added a third in the second-half.

The scoreline stated simply that Falkirk had won 3-1 and Stewart Kennedy got little of the applause. However, I never forgot that performance and I was a bit astonished that no other club moved for him before Ally bought him. He is the type of player you can put pressure on, but you can never be too confident that it will pay off.

Defensive

On the left Chic McLelland and Billy Williamson are battling it out for supremacy. McLelland is probably the better defensive player, but Williamson has the ability to throw forward long, accurate balls and, like I said before, that is the name of the game up Pittodrie way at the moment.

Bobby Clark has never played better than this season. He seems to have recovered his enthusiasm for the game and he looks as though he is really enjoying himself. In The League Cup match against Ayr at Somerset Park earlier in the season he lost a first minute goal to Gerry Phillips and then went on to display all his goalkeeping talents. The loss of a first-minute goal may have proved disastrous to the nerves of a young 'keeper, but Bobby recovered superbly, made several brilliant saves and eventually that man Joe Harper grabbed the equaliser.

That, then, is Aberdeen. A strong, resolute, determined team. Sometimes dreadfully unspectacular and sometimes wonderfully entertaining. They are one of the fittest teams in the world. They look as though they have the stamina to run all day. They are not the sort of team who are likely to lose by a three-goal margin to anyone. At the same time if they hope to pile on the goals at the other end they must put a bit more adventure into their play. It will not always pay to let the other teams do the running.

Aberdeen are on top of the world at the moment and the final whistle at Hampden had hardly time to fade away after the League Cup Final when Ally MacLeod was telling everyone willing to listen that Aberdeen were now the only team in Scotland who could win the Grand Slam of all three trophies this season. Only MacLeod would immediately think of that!

Revenge for national team

THE WEST GERMAN national team took revenge for its defeat in the final of the European Championship when they beat Czechoslovakia by 2-0 in a friendly. The match attracted a capacity crowd of 60,412 to Hannover's Niedersachsen-stadium who saw a good performance from their side which had no weaknesses and impressed with its teamwork.

The Czechs were handicapped by the absence of five men from their European Championship winning team, but they could boast of a long unbeaten run of 24 matches — stretching in fact back to a defeat against England at Wembley in October 1974. This splendid series was ended by first half goals from Flohe (17) and Beer (34) and if the Germans had not relaxed (or tired?), it might easily have been more.

WEST GERMAN Newsletter by Arthur Rotmil

The side is rather surprisingly not yet in the process of rejuvenation. In fact eight men were over 28 years old and only Hoeness, Bonhof and Rummenigge could be considered as on the threshold of international careers. They are however establishing themselves as permanent members of the squad.

Manager Helmut Schön was quite pleased with the performance against the Czechs and said afterwards: "For just over an hour our team played exceptionally well, thus continuing the good work from the Wales match. Of course, these Czechs were much stronger opponents. We tried to play it fast and direct and unfortunately seem to have lost our rhythm in the closing stages, possibly due to tiredness."

Schön would not be drawn on the subject of rejuvenation, but as I mentioned in my earlier Newsletter, the Germans are using a B-team for the graduation of their younger players, who will eventually be incorporated into the senior side.

Flohe's goal was Germany's 1,000th in international matches. Full back Berti Vogts celebrated his 75th cap, but his joy was overshadowed by a groin injury (he was substituted by Kaltz), which required an operation.

BORUSSIA RECORD

ON THE domestic front the biggest talking point was the first defeat of champions and League leaders Borussia Monchengladbach. After a record start with 23 points from 13 games (the old mark was held jointly by Bayern and 1860 Munich with 22 pts.), the title holders crashed in Hamburg by 4-1! As so ofter happens, just when most experts began predicting an unchallenged run to the title, the Gladbacher defeat opened up the race with Bayern and Eintracht Brunswick in hot pursuit. But it must be said that Borussia's recent line-ups sadly missed four midfield players: Wimmer, Danner, Kulik and Stielike — all injured!

The champions stand, together with Bayern, in the quarter-finals of the European Champions Cup which they reached after a disgraceful brawl in which Italian champions AC Torino had three men (including the goalkeeper) sent off in the second leg at Düsseldorf. Referee Delcourt of Belgium was so severe on the Italians, that one got the impression he was trying to atone for some dreadful errors of his colleagues, whose dubious decisions in the past had deprived Borussia of European glory.

But whilst Delcourt was unanimously praised by the German Press the same media slayed referee Clive Thomas, apparently regarded as the top British official. Mr. Thomas controlled the UEFA-C[illegible] match Español Barcelona v. Eintracht Bru[illegible]ck in which he awarded the Spaniards two penalties and sent off the Eintracht player Merkhoffer, for protesting. No other British referee was ever condemned so comprehensively by the Press in West Germany as Clive Thomas, after his, according to reporters, "one-sided" performance in Barcelona.

One team which did not have to worry about referees in European Cup games were the holders Bayern Munich. Their stunning 5-0 win over Czech champions Banik Ostrava put them into the quarter-finals for the fifth year running. And then Bayern proceeded to win the first leg of the unofficial world club championship when they beat Brazil's Cruzeiro of Belo Horizonte, the South American champions by 2-0 in Munich. Until ten minutes from time the Brazilians, defending mostly with 8-9 men held out, then goals by Gerd Müller and Kapellmann settled the issue. Bayern have looked erratic in several Bundesliga matches but they have proved time and again their almost unique ability to prepare and to concentrate for a specific game of importance.

Bayern are clearly the team for the big occasion — but perhaps motivated by the enormous bonuses which are dangled before them for the really vital matches?

Gerd Müller remains the supreme striker. Another four goals — this time v. Hamburger SV — mean that he has now hit four in seven *Bundesliga* games; not forgetting five goals in a match on four occasions!

Holton battles his way back to the top sphere

by ERIC THORNTON

HERE'S THE best of New Year wishes to a friendly star who has known it as tough as the next one, yet never lost a wonderful faith in himself — JIM HOLTON.

They used to sing their tributes to Big Him, and no less a person than Billy Bremner, when skippering Scotland, applied the hallmark by going on record this way: "He's a super fellow, and so dependable."

He had proved that with three different outfits at different levels of the game — West Bromwich Albion, Shrewsbury Town, and Manchester United — and is now proceeding to do it with Sunderland.

Yes, sir. This genial giant of muscle and bone, who has been feted and idolised in club and international matches by thousands in different parts of the world, is once more batting for a top reference.

Of course, another challenge is nothing new. The villager from Lanarkshire, whose eyes of blue were almost immortalised by the songsters on the terraced acres of Hampden, has had to re-establish himself every few years.

As a schoolboy recruit of 15, for instance, he fought at The Hawthorns for the right assessment from Alan Ashman, and then had the good fortune to sign for Shrewsbury, where the Gay Meadow boss was then none other than Harry Gregg, a man with a flair for moulding successes.

Within no time at all, challenge No. 3 was coming up. And that time the assessor was Tommy Docherty, who, after searching all the Home counties decided that the Holton boy could become an effective defender for plugging the gaps.

He did just that. But nevertheless Manchester United went down, just the same, the following year. Yet The Doc still voted for the miner's son. And the bustling 6ft-plus helped haul them back and also became Scotland's first choice for the No. 5 spot.

The future looked bright. Then it became as bleak as the neighbouring Pennines in storm. For successive leg fractures laid him aside, and the victim was left living with worry and doubt.

His temperature also soared when, one morning, he read that the United chief, during a discussion on a new defensive partnership, had said: "With due respect to Jim Holton, I think the days of the stopper centre-half are now over."

That was almost a knock-out blow. But the 24-year-old carried on the fight for fitness, and eventually, with both feet on the ground once again, was concentrating on the pros and cons of a further stage in a mixed career.

There didn't seem much joy for him at Old Trafford, those days. And particularly when the supremo didn't include him in a tour squad because of fitness doubts, though it was a fact that Jim had been reaching top gear in 15 reserve games.

The sun came out again, however, and in the shape of an invitation from the other side of the world that set the soccer traveller on the move once more with the pilot putting the plane's nose down over Miami and its sun-kissed beaches.

Preference

Followed an 8-week U.S. tour with the Toros of the North American League, and a return flight for a player who was guessing that another move seemed to be on the cards in England, although there was a personal preference for staying at Old Trafford.

Finally, an offer came out of the blue. Sunderland signed the big boy that time, and pitched him right into a battle for First Division safety points before there was time for him to be on anything but nodding terms with his new team mates.

Ian MacFarlane, then caretaker-manager of Sunderland, was duly impressed, and suggested the possibility of Jim being recruited yet again for Scotland's World Cup squad — a comment that went down well with the subject.

The world was than a better, warmer place, with the knowledge that at least one club had faith in the ability of JIM HOLTON.

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FINANCIAL CRISIS

IT MAY sound more like market gossip, yet it is a fact that the English League may be very soon in the melting pot unless inflation is firmly checked, and rocketing costs are controlled this New Year.

A vicious financial spiral is now taking a full toll of all British sport. Soccer is being inflicted with considerable additional problems while wage bills are often staying ahead of income at all levels.

There have been obvious rumblings for some time now. And these have contained unhappy suggestions about nearly a dozen clubs including, for instance, such well established and respected organisations as Portsmouth and Luton Town.

One has difficulty recognising the possibility that Jimmy Dickinson's old Fratton Park headquarters, where Jack Tinn, of the famous spats, was supremo so many long years, may be adversely affected unless the position greatly improves.

Everybody living around that Navy corner of these islands knows the strength of the bankers' call but, surprisingly, the crowds have not yet rallied sufficiently with the right kind of support — the life-saving cash.

The outlook has improved in Bedfordshire because of aid from different quarters, and I believe Chester are feeling happier about a sizeable cheque which had been delayed after the Town signing of the brothers Futcher nearly two years ago.

Now, however, there are financial problems at Burnley, the small-town club with the big-town record of League and Cup triumphs. But it's my confident bet they'll survive, just as Chelsea are doing while the folk at The Bridge are in the red to the fantastic extent of over £3m.

I can't imagine the obituary notices being required in any of those particular cases, but there are others, unfortunately, who may not live to fight again after the curtains finally come down next May.

Let's take a quick look at Burnley, who always seem to be contesting odds of one kind or another. That's a point which will be more appreciated by remembering their remarkable geographical position — a desolate outpost of the old Lancashire cotton belt.

They face more rivals for support than even any of the London outfits. No fewer than eleven League teams are almost within the proverbial stone's throw. For, sandwiched between the four big guns of Manchester and Liverpool, they are also encircled by Blackpool, Preston, Bolton, Oldham, Bury, Blackburn and Southport.

The town itself has a population of only 80,000, yet by tremendous good management the First Division game has been played to just average attendances for a Helluva long time, though just now the proud League originals are out of the top circle.

Their heads have been kept above water largely because of a wonderful coaching system which has netted them over £2m for home spun material in the space of merely a span of three decades, during which time turnstile receipts have rarely been sufficient to balance accounts.

The going is certainly rough at the moment. That's especially unfortunate as their Turf Moor headquarters has now become one of Britain's showpieces with the spending of nearly £1½m on ground improvements.

Sometimes I think the fans on that windswept stretch of the Pennines don't realise how many stars played for Burnley before being destroyed by their foolish criticism.

At one period, their boos also made life a Hell on earth for Jimmy Adamson, the manager who turned down the England job before it was even handed to Don Revie. Now, a section has been baying for the blood of Bob Lord, the chairman who built the club.

They should be thankful their club is not in the same class as Workington, where 2,000 is a crowd, and everybody in the little coastal town is now fearful they'll have to apply for re-election for the fourth successive time — if they submerge!

Ray Hankin, sold by Burnley to Leeds United to help clear some of the club's debts.

STRIKE MANY OUT

by Eric Batty

REGULAR READERS will remember that over the years I have campaigned more than anything else against what I regard as the twin evils of soccer: the failure of referees to fulfil their role, accept their responsibilities and sort out the kickers; and the managers who send some of their defenders out to kick.

Going back as far as the middle 1960's it was common for an England side to include a kicker in midfield . . . and every level of the game, right down to the kids at school, youth club leaders, schoolmasters, the lot, followed the lead. I reported once before that at a schoolboy game some years ago I heard a schoolmaster shout to one of his players from the line: "Get hold of that number ten and kick him." We nearly came to blows over that, for believe it or not the boys playing were only about twelve years old! That was the way to bring kids up at the time.

What we find now is a situation in which First Division clubs everywhere who have good strikers are hanging on to them as if their lives depended on it (as in fact they do). Other clubs, less fortunate, are searching around like mad, but wherever a manager goes he is spotted and even at a Third or Fourth Division game, it doesn't take a genius to figure out who is being watched.

The next thing we know is that other clubs are attracted to the previously unknown striker, and the bidding starts . . . with back-handers, lowly club managers being offered money "to see that your boy comes to us" and the crooks and con-men who masquerade as football club managers having a field day, trying to sell farm labourers turned goal-getters to First Division clubs for big fees.

The writing is already on the wall. Doomsday has arrived.

Obvious decision

It isn't only in England that really good strikers are rare. All over the world young boys who played up front were subjected to kicking and all kinds of foul play and the best of them, the most intelligent and the most skilful made the obvious decision . . . *to play in mid-field.*

Go back to the late 1940's and early fifties when the Italian frontiers were open. AC Milan didn't buy a foreign goalkeeper, full back or stopper. Almost anyone in good physical shape can be coached to destroy. But artists are born and not made. Thus it was that Gunnar Gren, Gunnar Nordahl and Nils Liedholm went from Sweden to Italy, followed by hosts of other forwards from all corners of the earth.

That of course is too literal; they came initially from Europe and South America, then the only football developed parts of the world.

Later we found Benfica recruiting Mario Coluna, Jose Augusto, Jose Aguas and Eusebio from Africa; and little Mali produced Salif Keita who was a big hit as a scorer in France for St. Etienne.

But the fact remains that the players imported were forwards, for there has always been a shortage of world class talent and the Italians had the money to buy the best.

Later they bought John Charles, converted from centre half to become a terror alongside the skills of the fiery Argentinian Enrico Sivori for Juventus . . . and Gerry Hitchens who in reality was little better than a blunt instrument. South Africa even produced Eddie Firmani who landed up as a striker in Italy via Charlton Athletic in England.

Today it is the West Germans and the Spaniards who have the money to buy and an open frontier that allows them to do so. As I write, Valencia are top of the Spanish First Division with an imported trio of strikers . . . Johnny Rep (from Holland), Carlos Martinez Diarte (Paraguay via Zaragoza and known as 'El Lobo' . . . the wolf and completing the trio is 22 years old Argentinian striker Mario Kempes whom former national team boss Cesar Menotti rated "better than any centre forward in Europe."

Right now the two top scorers in Spain are, after 11 games:

Diarte (Valencia) 11
Kempes (Valencia) 9

Unless the Spaniards and/or West Germans close their frontiers, they are gradually going to drain off the best strikers in the world.

Even Belgium has got into the act, importing Peter Anderson (from Luton Town) who was the leading scorer early on this season and could come again; Roger Davies at champions FC Bruges and Duncan McKenzie a centre forward with Leeds United, bought by RSC Anderlecht.

I could go on on this theme, but suffice to point out that European Cup holders Bayern Munchen made a very serious offer for big Joe Jordan of Leeds and Scotland.

What do they get when they buy a striker these days?

Roberto Bettega of Italy — how long will he have at the top?

KERS—TOO NY ARE PUT T OF ACTION

They get finishing power, either on the ground or in the air . . . and most of all they buy a bundle of courage and determination. But there is a catch here too. The time will come, as it has for all the top strikers over the last ten years when, as their bank balances mount, they decide that all the damage to their achilles tendons, all the kicked calfs, all the punching and general buffeting about is not worth it. When the courage goes, everything goes.

The player most subjected to intimidation and kicking by opponents was, of course, Pele. Such were his skills that he could destroy any defence, beat any opponent . . . once he had the ball. The only answer was to stop him getting the ball and that meant really tight-marking, quick tackling and when all that failed, the BOOT.

Pele was prematurely kicked out of the 1962 and 1966 World Cups. In 1962 the Brazilians dipped into their bag of reserves to produce Amarildo who went on to get vital goals, helped win the World Cup and finished up in Italy.

In 1966, with an aging team, Brazil's big hope was Pele, and when he went in a preliminary round match against Portugal, their chance went with him.

Perception

In England, First Division clubs in need of a striker are now forced to look at players in lower Divisions and ask themselves: "Can this boy play in the faster First Division game? Does he have the skill to play at top speed which is around 100 miles an hour? Does he have the intelligence to think at that pace or will his skills and his perception be unable to adapt to the needs of the highly competitive First Division?"

Quite soon clubs will have to gamble on £100,000 plus transfer fees for players that could fail. Some have already lumbered themselves with strikers that cost big fees but having failed to measure up are now virtually impossible to sell and no good to their clubs. This trend will continue and get worse.

The game as a whole will suffer, as it is starting to suffer now. And it could all have been avoided.

Not too many years ago there was a Football League decision to clamp down on the biggest weapon in the defender's armoury . . . the illegal kick from behind disguised as a challenge. "Tackling from behind" was barred and for a few short weeks a mini-miracle occurred. I saw defenders who were lost, playing like little girls because they were afraid to use the only thing they had . . . the ability to go in and chop players from behind.

Tragically it didn't last long, and after a few weeks it began to peter out. Not long after the attempted clean-up, I remember chatting to a man in the hall of a First Divison club after a game. He told me he was the official Football League assessor and he had been watching the referee.

"What did you think of him?" I asked. "First class," was the reply, "Ten out of ten".

My honest opinion (formed during the game) was that he ought to be shot! Over and over again I have written in these pages that I have seen English referees do a first class job — in international or competitive club games I have seen *on the Continent*. But in English games, they adopt the old British attitude. When a player gets viciously chopped from behind, they wave play on. *Play on, it's a men's game.*

I've heard that so often it makes me sick.

Now the game as a whole is sick, and though I've seen the symptoms for years it is surely becoming clear that the strikers, the men who get the goals that are the life-blood of the game, have got to be better protected.

We lost Pele because of totally inadequate refereeing. We have lost other top strikers who are still playing but have been 'chicken' for years and lived on their reputations, still making big money. Sooner or later, probably sooner, all the top strikers will go chicken as they reach the point where they have had enough.

We should have acted when the signs first cropped up and didn't. Now it is clear that if we do not act, and act quick, there will in say seven years time, not be a striker left in England who is worth his salt. All the good players will be playing in midfield, and the centre forwards will be even worse than some of them are now. Robots who are insensitive to threats, determined enough to take the kicking in exchange for the money, but not good enough to really do the job and get goals.

The remedy for English football, as with Britain's ailing economy, will be neither easy nor pleasant. Kickers will have to be sent off and suspended for long periods by men with the determination to clean up the game for it's own good.

Our top referees must begin at long last to control games as they do abroad, as Jack Taylor did in the 1974 World Cup final. That was a great performance but one that I never saw him match in an English League game.

Elite panel

Again, did you know that it is only in Britain that there is not an elite panel of referees who *only referee First Division matches?*

Only the best are good enough to cope. It should be an honour to get on the list of top men, as it is abroad.

This does not mean that this problem is only a British or an English one. It is a world wide malady, for the fact has to be faced that amateur referees are just no match for the professional kickers. They could be, I have to say that because without hope then all is already lost, but they will need prodding, pushing and a lot of encouragement from the top. The referees must get tough with the kickers and hard men. They must reverse their priorities.

Never mind if a player calls a referee a four letter word. Swallow. But if a player commits two fouls . . . . . he should find himself in the dressing room after being cautioned for the first one.

Believe me, in English football *crime does pay* — and it is killing the game.

News from HUNGARY by Leslie Vernon

NO NEED TO PLAY GAMES!

HUNGARIAN CLUB managers have a curious habit of declaring their targets for the season before the opening of the campaign. They publicly state that their respective teams would like to collect 'x' number of points during the autumn-half of the championship, and that they hope to finish, let's say, 7th, 8th or 9th!

As most of them are honest fellows, who clearly recognize the limitations of their own players, their modest ambitions are so realistic, that it seems almost superfluous to play-off the fixtures. Might as well play round-robins between those who aspire to be champs (Dozsa, Ferencvaros), aim for bronze medals (three teams), etc.

This is of course a deliberately facetious suggestion, because I do find their modesty slightly irritating. Wouldn't it be better to aim for the top, then fail gallantly? Inferiority complexes — justified or auto-suggestive — must have adverse effect on the players. Withoug a great deal of self-confidence, nothing can be achieved in football, and the perfect psychological preparation must lie between the "you are the greatest" and "you have no chance against this lot" attitudes.

On the other hand, this open declaration of intent leaves a comfortable safety margin for the manager. For instance, a few weeks ago, Haladas were well placed to take over the lead, but their boss, the ex-international full-back, Laszlo Sarosi, said: "We are in a false position. I'll be satisfied if we finish the autumn campaign fifth or sixth."

True enough, when the curtain came down, they were sixth — nobody could blame Sarosi! Perhaps it would help the security of employment of English club managers if they would also be allowed to be "realistic".

If, for instance, the Coventry boss would say that his target is to average one point per game, and a mid-table position, he couldn't be sacked if his team fail to win any honours.

But back to Hungary . . . The first half of the campaign provided reasonable but no better than average football. The vast majority of the games were given three stars out of five rating in the sports daily, "Nepsport" with a few fours and a sprinkling of twos.

Playing too many double-headers in the Nepstadium didn't work. Only Ferencvaros have a substantial following in the capital, and when they didn't feature on the bill, the place was like a deserted mausoleum.

However, when the real derbies were staged there, capacity crowds turned up — the national obsession for football is still evident. Sad to say that there is no outstanding team in Hungary at present — Dozsa and Fradi are only two of the best in a mediocre field.

Their see-saw battle for the "half-time" crown came to life when, in the penultimate round, Dozsa were beaten 2-0 by Raba Eto, putting Fradi on top by a point. But in the 17th (and last) match, Videoton suddenly found the form which had eluded them for so long, and defeated the green-and-whites by exactly the same score, while Dozsa won 3-2 against Tatabanya.

Consequently, the "lilacs" are the autumn champs with 27 points. Their rejuvenated team play a refreshing 3-3-4 formation, going for goals even on away grounds. Feeling slightly superior to their domestic opponents, who usually have only two men up-front against them, they can afford the luxury of an extra forward.

But when it comes to international football (see Bilbao), this adventurous approach often becomes suicidal. Due to injuries, suspensions and other disturbing factors, Ferencvaros didn't have a particularly happy time.

Glorious

It says volumes for coach Dalnoki's shrewd handling of his resources that they are only one point adrift of the leaders. But it must be said that last season's glorious promise didn't materialize this term — they remained static instead of progressing and improving.

Vasas — on 23 points — have had their best autumn for years. Internal differences seemed to be resolved, and forwards Gass, Kovacs and the "reformed's Varadi were scoring freely. Due to "ill-health" — undetectable by a medical practitioner — Dr. Karoly Lakat has been relieved of his duties at Honved, and his assistant, the former international centre-forward, Lajos Tichy, has taken over the team management.

Under him, the Army-side have been slightly more consistent, and they are level on points with Vasas. Their avowed aim is a place in Europe next season, and they are reasonably placed for that limited objective. Five provincial clubs follow the "big four" of Budapest. Videoton (20 points) had a disappointing run, Haladas (19) should be pleased with themselves, Bekescsaba (18) ditto. Raba Eto (17) and Zalaegerszeg (16) are mid-table fixtures as they have been for Christmases past.

The rest of the 18-strong field are near the relegation zone, but only newly promoted Dorog, with a miserly haul of eight points seem doomed. Like some of the Hungarian wines of the 1976 crop, their football has been quite good, but far from vintage . . .

Top scorers: Fazekas (Dozsa) 15 goals; Gass (Vasas) 13; Varadi (Vasas) 13; Nyilasi (Ferencvaros) 9; Tieber (Videoton) 9.

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The great Magyars —where are they now?

LAST MONTH I drew attention to the 23rd anniversary of the 'arrival' of the great Hungarian team, which beat England at Wembley 6-3. A few months later they hammered England 7-1 in Budapest . . . . . seven because England had once put seven past the Hungarians in their early days in the game, and gone on to glorious failure in the 1954 World Cup.

It was in that series that I saw the best game I have ever seen — the only match I ever saw in which *both* teams were great. This was of course the Hungary v. Uruguay World Cup semi-final in Lausanne, drawn 2-2 and won 4-2 by Hungary after an extra glorious half hour.

Thus Hungary went on to Berne and the Wankdorf Stadium where in pouring rain they took an early 2-0 lead . . . with West Germany there to provide token opposition before the magical Hungarians received the world crown that everyone recognised they were entitled to.

Overtaken

This was one of the biggest tragedies in world football for while the West Germans proved themselves a very under-rated team with great players of their own like Fritz Walter and Werner Liebrich, the great Hungarians got caught, overtaken at 3-2 and despite a storming finish were beaten.

Two years later the team broke up though for example Nandor Hidegkuti did his best with an assortment of players in the 1958 World Cup in Sweden and even today right back Jeno Buzansky, fat, bald and bow legged is still playing for the Hungarian veterans team, one of the greatest sides the world has ever known is now, not so much forgotten, as not seen by the present generation of players and fans.

Initiative

One of these days perhaps, one of the TV channels in Britain will have the initiative to show their film of this golden oldie, and show the fans who prefer to fight on the terraces today, a glimpse of what they are missing.

Who knows, it might even give the pot hungry managers and directors of the leading teams in England a pang of conscience.

The captain, Ferenc Puskas, did go on to stage a come-back after a FIFA suspension along with Sandor Kocsis. The last named played with distinction for CF Barcelona in their glory days under Helenio Herrera and amongst other achievements made a terrible mess of Wolverhampton Wanderers — then "unbeaten at home to foreign teams".

Puskas, of course, fought his way back to fitness to star with Real Madrid and alongside Alfredo Di Stefano, appeared in several European Cup Finals for Real Madrid including the never-to-be-forgotten 7-3 hammering of Eintracht Frankfurt at Hampden Park, Glasgow in 1960.

Where are they now?

Ferenc Puskas is in Spain where he has business interests but has coached in several different clubs since he quit. Not least he guided outsiders Panathinaikos to the European Cup Final and at the moment is said to have one foot on a plane that will take him to Chile to coach Colo Colo.

Coached

Sandor Kocsis lives quietly near Barcelona, making infrequent appearances for CFB's veterans team in charity games; Nandor Hidegkuti coached in Italy (Fiorentina) where he once made a very shrewd observation to me: "More and more people are thinking about the game today than ever before, and the more they think, the worse the game becomes." Hidegkuti is now coaching successfully in Egypt.

Joszef Bozsik, a truly outstanding right half has had a spell as boss of his old club Honved but with a bad heart he has been forced out of the game and at 51, now helps his wife run a boutique they own in Budapest.

Left winger Zoltan Czibor who, it transpired later, couldn't stand Puskas, went with Kocsis to play in Spain and today owns a bar in Barcelona. Right winger Laszlo Budai, a Lieutenant in the Hungarian Army when with Honved, stayed on to make the army his career and is still a serving officer at an Army PE school near Budapest.

Goalkeeper Gyula Grosics, also 51, now works in a tourist office in Budapest, Buzanski is coach of his old club Dorog, left half Zozeef Zakarias is coaching in Africa and Mihaly Lantos after coaching in Switzerland and with several lesser clubs in Hungary is with a Division II team.

Gyula Lorant is perhaps the most successful of them all as a coach having earned a reputation in West Germany with 1st FC Kaiserslautern and Offenbach Kickers. He had a spell in Greece with PAOK Salonika and not long ago returned to West Germany to take over 1975 Cup winners Eintracht Frankfurt who were having a lean time.

Lorant's first decision made his new men sweat, for in the first month with him the Frankfurt players on average lost more than four pounds . . . and results improved. Unhappily however, neither Lorant nor anyone else has yet produced a team that comes anywhere near the great team they once played for.

Ferenc Puskas, pictured playing for Real Madrid.

THE STATE OF THE NATION

Eric Batty presents the second of a two-part special on HUNGARY

Play-off for Port-au-Prince

COLIN JOSE reports from North America

THE VITAL PLAY off game between the United States and Canada to determine a place in the second round of World Cup preliminary round play in the CONCACAF region will take place in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on December 22, 1976.

The decision was made by the FIFA World Cup committee meeting in Buenos Aires on November 28 after the two contries could not agree on a play off site or date after considerable wrangling.

Originally Canada wanted to play the game in Mexico within a week to ten days after they had tied the Mexicans in Toluca, thus forcing the play off. However, the U.S. feeling that Canada had no chance even of a tie in Mexico had disbanded its team, considering that it was through to the next round.

In subsequent discussions both nations considered a two game play off with games in Vancouver and Seattle rather than a single play off in a neutral contry. With both associations short of funds as usual it was hoped that this would offset the financial problems. FIFA agreed to this but the move fell through for a variety of reasons.

Now FIFA has decided that the game must be played by the deadline of December 31, 1976 as laid down in the rules of the competition and not delayed until the spring as both associations had requested on separate occasions. Latterly the Canadians had made this request on the basis that it was no longer possible to play soccer out of doors anywhere in the country at this time of the year and therefore they would have to leave the country even to train.

Display

All of this was of course brought about by Canada's surprising display in Toluca in a game that they came very close to winning at times despite the fact that the Mexicans carried the game to them most of the time. In fact Canada looked particularly dangerous on the break and had at least four chances to win, the best coming early in the game when Brian Budd hit the Mexican bar.

The Canadians played most intelligently throughout conserving energy right from the start in the rarefied atmosphere and thus the height did not bother them. The defence played particularly well with the back four of Robert Iarusci, brothers Sam and Bob Lenarduzzi and Bruce Wilson outstanding. When the Mexicans did get a chance they found Tony Chursky in excellent form in goal with one superb save from a free kick by Davilla that had class stamped all over it.

At the end the capacity crowd of 36,000 gave the Canadians a standing ovation while throwing bottles at their own players. In fact at one point referee Henry Landauer threatened to abandon the game unless the crowd stopped throwing bottles at the Mexican players.

Emergence

Canada's win over Mexico in Vancouver and their tie in Toluca, both games demonstrating that Mexico can no longer be considered as the single strong nation in CONCACAF, contrasted sharply with their two games against the United States.

Competition between Canada and the United States at the international level which began as far back as 1885 has taken on a new intensity in recent years as both nations begin to take the game much more seriously than before. The emergence of the North American Soccer League has of course been a factor in all this with the success of the United States in the World Cup a key factor in their promotion of the game.

This time as in the past the two nations have unfortunately been drawn in the same sub group thus placing what may well be the three strongest nations against one another early on with one certain to be eliminated.

As a result considerable tension surrounded the two games between the two contries and will undoubtedly surround the game in Port-au-Prince. The United States drawing almost all of its players from NASL clubs surprised Canada in Vancouver by taking an early lead and in general being far more aggressive than the Canadians, who somewhat puzzlingly for a home game came out to play defensively.

Quick goals

It was much the same story in the return game in Seattle where Canada only needed a point to qualify. Still as in Vancouver it was only the excellent goalkeeping of Arnold Mausser who kept the U.S. in the game at times, but two quick goals near the end from Julie Veee and Miro Rys almost sank Canada and led U.S. coach Walter Chyzowych to comment "I'll donate my salary for the next three years (to the Canadian soccer development programme) if Canada wins in Mexico."

Chyzowych came awfully close to losing his pay cheques, with his remark undoubtedly based on the difficulty that his U.S. team had with the Mexicans where in Los Angeles it was Mausser once again who was largely responsible for the tie, while in Toluca the United States were widely outplayed.

For the game in Port-au-Prince both coaches seem sure to go with almost exactly the same squads that they used in the earlier games. The U.S. has already played a number of games in Haiti early in November in preparation for this play off wherever it might have been staged, while the Canadians are now almost certain to seek similar games with the Haitians.

With soccer's popularity increasing in North America by leaps and bounds this game has to be the most important ever played between the two countries.

STEADY PROGRESS IN SOLOMONS SOCCER

AS AN organized sport, soccer in the Solomon Islands has a short history. The first major league competition got under way in the capital, Honiara, in 1947, with eight teams entering initially. Today there are about twenty leagues run throughout the islands, with thirty-two sides in the three Honiara Senior divisions. Leading club sides include Kakamora, K.G. Old Boys, Sunrise and Rangers.

The Solomons played its first international matches in the 1964 Fiji Games, losing heavily in each game, a trend continued in Noumea two years later, where a 1-8 defeat was recorded against New Caledonia. The standard of the national side has recently considerably improved. Though losing 1-5 to Fiji in 1969, in the 1975 Guam Games the Solomon Islanders surprised their old rivals by first holding them to a 1-1 draw, and then gaining a 3-2 victory to take the bronze medal.

Though soccer is popular at village level as well as in Honiara, the growth of the game is held back by lack of inter-island competition and the difficulty of attracting visits by foreign teams. The Islanders have so far staged only one home international (against the New Hebrides in 1972). With improved air communications, the S.I.F.A. is now eager to invite club and representative sides from all parts of the world and prepared to "cover all accommodation and internal travel expenses".

PAUL HARRIS

WORLD CUP GUIDE

Argentina '78

27. 2.77 Israel v Korea Rep.
Japan v Korea DPR
6. 3.77 Israel v Japan
Korea Rep. v Korea DPR
13. 3.77 Japan v Israel
Korea DPR v Korea Rep.
20. 3.77 Korea Rep. v Israel
Korea DPR v Japan
26. 3.77 Japan v Korea Rep.
27. 3.77 Korea DPR v Israel
3. 4.77 Korea Rep. v Japan
4. 4.77 Israel v Korea DPR

EUROPE

Group 1
23. 5.76 Cyprus 1, Denmark 5
16.10.76 Portugal 0, Poland 2
27.10.76 Denmark 5, Cyprus 0
31.10.76 Poland 5, Cyprus 0
17.11.76 Portugal 1, Denmark 0
5.12.76 Cyprus 1, Portugal 2
1. 5.77 Denmark v Poland
15. 5.77 Cyprus v Poland
21. 9.77 Poland v Denmark
29.10.77 Poland v Portugal
16.11.77 Portugal v Cyprus

Group 2
13. 6.76 Finland 1, England 4
22. 9.76 Finland 7, Luxembourg 1
13.10.76 England 2, Finland 1
16.10.76 Luxembourg 1, Italy 4
17.11.76 Italy 2, England 0
30. 3.77 England v Luxembourg
26. 5.77 Luxembourg v Finland
8. 6.77 Finland v Italy
12.10.77 Luxembourg v England
15.10.77 Italy v Finland
16.11.77 England v Italy
3.12.77 Italy v Luxembourg

Group 3
31.10.76 Turkey 4, Malta 0
17.11.76 German DR 1, Turkey 1
5.12.76 Malta 0, Austria 1
2. 4.77 Malta v German DR
17. 4.77 Austria v Turkey
30. 4.77 Austria v Malta
24. 9.77 Austria v German DR
12.10.77 German DR v Austria
29.10.77 German DR v Malta
30.10.77 Turkey v Austria
16.11.77 Turkey v German DR
27.11.77 Malta v Turkey

Group 4
5. 9.76 Iceland 0, Belgium 1
8. 9.76 Iceland 0, Netherlands 1
13.10.76 Netherlands 2, Northern Ireland 2
10.11.76 Belgium 2, Northern Ireland 0
26. 3.77 Belgium v Netherlands
11. 6.77 Iceland v Northern Ireland
31. 8.77 Netherlands v Iceland
4. 9.77 Belgium v Iceland
21. 9.77 Northern Ireland v Netherlands
26.10.77 Netherlands v Belgium
16.11.77 Northern Ireland v Belgium

Group 5
9.10.76 Bulgaria 2, France 2
17.11.76 France 2, Eire 0
30. 3.77 Eire v France
1. 6.77 Bulgaria v Eire
12.10.77 Eire v Bulgaria
16.11.77 France v Bulgaria

ASIA

Winners of Groups I to IV to be known by 31.3.77

OCEANIA
Winner to be known by 31.7.77

Group I	Group II	Group III	Group IV	
Hong Kong	Israel	Iran	Bahrain	Australia
Indonesia	Japan	Iraq	Kuwait	New Zealand
Malaysia	DPR Korea	Saudi Arabia	Un. Ar. Emir.	Taiwan
Thailand	Rep. Korea	Syria	Qatar	
Singapore				
Sri Lanka				
1 winner	1 winner	1 winner	1 winner	Winner Oceania

1.4 to 31.7.77

Winner ASIA

1.8 to 30.11.77

Qualify for Argentina

Group 6
16. 6.76 Sweden 2, Norway 0
8. 9.76 Norway 1, Switzerland 0
9.10.76 Switzerland 1, Sweden 2
6. 6.77 Sweden v Switzerland
7. 9.77 Norway v Sweden
30.10.77 Switzerland v Norway

Group 7
13.10.77 Czechoslovakia 2, Scotland 0
17.11.76 Scotland 1, Wales 0
30. 3.77 Wales v Czechoslovakia
21. 9.77 Scotland v Czechoslovakia
12.10.77 Wales v Scotland
16.11.77 Czechoslovakia v Wales

Group 8
10.10.76 Spain 1, Yugoslavia 0
6. 4.77 Rumania v Spain
8. 5.77 Yugoslavia v Rumania
6.10.77 Spain v Rumania
3.11.77 Rumania v Yugoslavia
30.11.77 Yugoslavia v Spain

Group 9
9.10.76 Greece 1, Hungary 1
24. 4.77 USSR v Greece
30. 4.77 Hungary v USSR
10. 5.77 Greece v USSR
18. 5.77 USSR v Hungary
25. 5.77 Hungary v Greece

CONCACAF
(extra preliminary matches)
Northern Area
24. 9.76 Canada 1, USA 1
3.10.76 USA 0, Mexico 0
10.10.76 Canada 1, Mexico 0
15.10.76 Mexico 3, USA 0
20.10.76 USA 2, Canada 0
27.10.76 Mexico 0, Canada 0

Central Area
4. 4.76 Panama 3, Costa Rica 2
2. 5.76 Panama 1, El Salvador 1
11. 7.76 Costa Rica 3, Panama 0
1. 8.76 El Salvador 4, Palma 1
17. 9.76 Panama 2, Guatemala 4
26. 9.76 Guatemala 7, Panama 0
1.12.76 El Salvador 1, Costa Rica 1
5.12.76 Costa Rica 0, Guatemala 0
8.12.76 Guatemala v El Salvador
12.12.76 Guatemala v Costa Rica
17.12.76 Costa Rica v El Salvador
19.12.76 El Savador v Guatemala

Caribbean Area
2. 4.76 Dom. Republic 0, Haiti 3
17. 4.76 Haiti 3, Dom. Republic 0
4. 7.76 Guyana 2, Surinam 0
31. 7.76 N. Antilles 1, Haiti 2
14. 8.76 Haiti 7, N. Antilles 0
15. 8.76 Barbados 2, Trinidad/Tobago 1
15. 8.76 Jamaica 1, Cuba 3
29. 8.76 Cuba 2, Jamaica 0
29. 8.76 Surinam 3, Guana 0
31. 8.76 Trinidad/Tobago 1, Barbados 0
14. 9.76 Trinidad/Tobago 3, Barbados 1
(3rd match in Barbados)
14.11.76 Surinam 1, Trinidad/Tobago 1
28.11.76 Trinidad/Tobago 2, Surinam 2
19.12.76 Play-off
28.11.76 Cuba 1, Haiti 1
11.12.76 Haiti v Cuba

AFRICA
Extra Peliminary Round
7. 3.76 Sierra Leone 5, Niger 1
21. 3.76 Niger 2, Sierra Leone 1
13. 3.76 Upper Volta 1, Mauritania 1
28. 3.76 Mauritania 0, Upper Volta 2

First Round
1. 4.76 Algeria 1, Libya 0
16. 4.76 Libya 0, Algeria 0
9. 5.76 Zambia 4, Malawi 0
30. 5.76 Malawi 0, Zambia 1
4. 9.76 Upper Volta 1, Ivory Coast 1
16. 9.76 Ivory Coast 2, Upper Volta 0
17.10.76 Togo 1, Senegal 0
10.10.76 Ghana 2, Guinea 1
16.10.76 Sierra Leone 0, Nigeria 0
17.10.76 Congo 2, Cameroon 2
Guinea 2, Ghana 1
16. 1.77 Ghana v Guinea
(play-off)
12.12.76 Morocco v Tunisia
9. 1.77 Tunisia v Morocco
Egypt 3, Ethiopia 0
Ethiopia 1, Egypt 2

ASIA/OCEANIA
3. 7.77 Australia v New Zeland
6. 7.77 Taiwan v Australia
10. 7.77 Australia v Taiwan
13. 7.77 N. Zealand v Taiwan
17. 7.77 N. Zealand v Australia
20. 7.77 Taiwan v N. Zealand

SOUTH AMERICA
Group 1
20. 2.77 Colombia v Brazil
24. 2.77 Colombia v Paraguay
6. 3.77 Paraguay v Colombia
9. 3.77 Brazil v Colombia
13. 3.77 Paraguay v Brazil
17/20. 3.77 Brazil v Paraguay

Classified Results

Europe

Switzerland (2) 2 (Muller, Kunzli)
Bulgaria (1) 2 (Vassilev, Jordanov)
Switzerland: Burgener; Trinchero, Bizzini, Guyot, Brechbuhl (Stohler), Barberis (Corniolley), Botteron, Pfister, Jeandupeux (Hasler), Kunzli, Muller
Bulgaria: Tichanov; Ivkov, Ivan Zafirov, Borislav Dimitrov, Vassilev, Kolev, Bonev (Denev), Panov, Voinov (Jordanov), Jeliaskov (Aleksandrov), Dimitar Dimitrov

Denmark (0) 1 (Rontved)
France (0) 1 (Platini)
Denmark: B. Larsen; J. Hansen, H. Jensen, Rontved, Ahlberg, Rasmussen, Olsen, H. Hansen, Bjerg, K. Hansen (Holmstrom), Kristensen
France: Baratelli; Janvion (Domenech), Adams, Tresor, Bossis, Largue, Platini, Bathenay, Rocheteau, Lacombe, Six

Norway (0) 1 (Lund)
Switzerland (0) 0
Norway: T. Jacobsen, Karlsen, Birkelund, Kordahl, Grondalen, Albertsen, Kvia, Hansen, Thunberg, Iversen, Lund
Switzerland: Burgener; Stohler, Bizzini (Guyot), Trinchero, Brechbuhl, Barberis, Kuhn, Botteron, Jeandupeux, Kunzli, Muller

Sweden (1) 1 (Torstensson)
Hungary (1) 1 (Ebedli)
Sweden: Hellstrom; Werner, Karlsson, Nordqvist, Bjorn Andersson, Borjesson, Linderoth, Torstensson, Wendt (Nordin), Sjoberg, Nilsson
Hungary: Gudai; Torok, Balint, Kantor, Ebedli (Nagy), Kereki, Pusztai, Nyilasi, Fazekas, Pinter, Magyar

England (1) 1 (Pearson)
Eire (0) 1 (Daly pen.)
England: Clemence; Todd, Madeley, Cherry, McFarland, Greenhoff, Keegan, Wilkins, Pearson, Brooking, George (Hill)
Eire: Kearne; Mulligan, Holmes, Martin, O'Leary, Brady, Daly, Conroy, Heighway, Giles, Givens

Scotland (4) 6 (Rioch, Masson pen., Dalglish, Gray (A.) 2, Gray (E))
Finland (0) 0
Scotland: Rough (Harvey); McGrain, Donachie, Rioch, Forsyth, Buchan, Dalglish, Gemmill, Gray (A.), Masson, Gray (E)
Finland: Alaja (Enckelman); Heikkinen (Ahonen), Vihtila, Makynen, Ranta, Jantunen, Suomalainen, Toivola, Dahlund, Rissanen, Paatelainen (Nieminen)

Austria (0) 3 (Kranki, Kogiberger, Kreuz pen.)
Switzerland (0) 1 (Trinchero pen.)
Austria: Koncilia; Horvath, Sara, Pezzey, Strasser, Hattenberger(Stering), Kogiberger, Kreuz, Kranki
Switzerland: Burgener; Brechbuhl, Trinchero, Bizzini, Chapuisat, Conz, Barberis, Botteron, Kuttel, Kunzli, Muller

Norway (2) 3 (Thunberg 2, P. Jacobsen)
Sweden (0) 2 (Torstensson, Sjoberg)
Norway: T. Jacobsen; Karlsen, Birkelund, Kordahl, Grondalen, Hansen, Kvia, Albertsen (Olsen), Thunberg, Iversen (P. Jacobsen), Lund
Sweden: Hagberg; Werner (Borg), Karlsson, Nordqvist, Borg (Nordin), Torstensson, Linderoth, Andersson, Larsson, Sjoberg, Nilsson

Finland (3) 7 (Aki Heiskanen, Esa Heiskanen 2, Rissanen 2, Heikkinen, Makynen pen.)
Luxembourg (0) (Zender)
Finland: Enckelman; Heikkinen, Vihtila, Makynen, Ranta, Jantunen (Pyykko), Esa Heiskane, Aki Heiskanen, Rissanen, Pastelainen (Neminen), Toivola
Luxembourg: R. Zender; Schaul, Fienghi (G. Zender), Hansen, Margue, Dresch, Pilot, Philipp, Orioli, Braun, Gilbert

Denmark (0) 0
Italy (1) 1 (Pulici)
Denmark: Larsen; Rontved; H. Hansen, H. Jensen, Ahlberg, Rasmussen, Bjerg, H. Hansen, Bastrup, Holmstrom, Kristensen
Italy: Zoff; Tardelli, Bellugi, Scirea, Rocca, Benetti, Capello, Patrizio Sala, Antognoni, Graziani, Pulici

Bulgaria (2) 2 (Bonev, Jeliaskov)
Turkey (0) 2 Ivkov own goal, Ali Kemal)
Bulgaria: Krastev; Grantcharov, Ivkov, Vassilev, Angelov, Borislav Dimitrov, Voinov, Bonev, Jeliaskov (Milanov), Panov (Dimitar Dimitrov), Denev
Turkey: Rasim; Alpaslan, Turgay, Cemil I, Ismail, Cemal, Fatih, Ali, Engin, Ali Kemal, Cemil II

East Germany (1) 1 (Riediger)
Hungary (1) 1 (Fazekas)
East Germany: Croy; Kische, Weiser, Weber, Kurbjuweit (Grobner), Lauck, Schade, Hafner, Heidler, Riediger (Kotte), Hoffmann
Hungary: Kovacs; Balint, J. Nagy, Kereki, Kantor, Nyilasi, Rab, A. Toth, Fazekas (Pusztai), Pasztor, Magyar (Fekete)

Rumania (1) 1 (Georgescu)
Czechoslovakia (1) 1 (Panenka)
Rumania: Raducanu; Satmareanu, Sandu, Cheran, Manea, Dumitru (O. Ionescu), Dinu, Balaci, Atodiresai (Florea), Georgescu, Iordanescu
Czechoslovakia: Vencel; Biros, Jurkemik, Ondrus, Gogh, Dobias, Pollak, Panenka, Masny, Kroupa (Mraz), Nehoda

Italy (1) 3 (Bettega 2, Graziani)
Yugoslavia (0) 0
Italy: Zoff; Rocca, Bellugi, Scirea, Tardelli, Patrizio Sala, Causio, Capello, Antognoni, Graziani, Bettega
Yugoslavia: Svilar; Jelilic, Peruzovic, Blogoevic, Jurcic, Hadziabdic, Muzinic (Halihodzic), Nikolic (Ivezic), Zungul, Djordjevic, Surjak

South America

Peru (0) 0
Uruguay (0) 0
Peru: Gonzalez Canosa, Trigueros, Melendez, Palacios, Salguero, Quesada, Velazquez, Neira (Carranza), Larrosa, Ruiz (Zuloago), Zeballos.
Uruguay: R. Rodriguez, De los Santos, Vilazan, Ramirez, D. Pereira, Javier (Roux), Muniz (Abalde), Jimenez, Morena, Unanue, R. E. Rodriguez (Victoriano).

Ecuador (0) 2 (Licciardi, Villafuerte)
Uruguay (1) 2 (Victoriano 2)
Ecuador: Garcis, Mendez, Carrera, Klinger, Nieves, Robur (Torres), Ortiz, Gomez, Villafuerte, Licciardi, Racinino.
Uruguay: R. Rodriguez, De los Santos, Vilazan, Roux, Pereira, Ramirez, Victoriano, Graffigna, Morena, Unanue, R. E. Rodriguez (Muniz).

Peru (0) 1 (Quesada)
Argentina (0) 3 (Houseman 2, Passarella)
Peru: Gonazalez Canosa, Soria (Palaulos), Melendez, Diaz, Trigueros, Rojas, Quesada, Velazquez, Perales (Carranza), La Rosa, Zeballos.
Argentina: Gatti, Tarantini, Olguin, Passarella, Carrascosa, Ardiles (Villa), Gallego, Valencia, Houseman, Saldano (Aguero), Bertoni.

Kevin Keegan (right) in action for England against Finland.

LEAGUE TABLES

ARGENTINA: National Championship
(Top two from each section qualify for final round)

Section A	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Boca Juniors	11	8	1	2	21	8	17
Quilmes	11	7	3	1	16	6	17
Independiente	11	6	3	2	16	12	15
At. Tucuman	11	5	3	3	16	11	13
Gimnasia Jujuy	11	4	3	4	13	14	11
Gim. La Plata	11	3	2	6	7	14	8
Chacarita Jnrs.	11	1	3	7	10	19	5
Temperley	11	2	1	8	11	21	5

Section B	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
River Plate	11	6	3	2	25	13	15
Banfield	11	5	4	2	21	12	14
Estudiantes La P	11	5	3	3	15	11	13
Atlanta	11	4	4	3	16	13	12
Racing	11	4	3	4	16	18	11
At. Ledesma	11	5	1	5	8	11	11
San Martin T.	11	1	3	7	5	14	5
San Telmo	11	1	2	8	9	28	4

Section C	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Huracan	12	6	4	2	20	10	16
Union S. Fe	12	5	5	2	20	11	15
Rosario Central	12	4	7	1	15	10	15
Aldosivi M d P	12	5	3	4	17	16	13
Platense	12	5	3	4	15	18	13
Velez Sarsfield	12	2	6	4	13	15	10
San Martin M.	12	3	4	5	14	20	10
Sp. Pat. For.	12	2	4	6	15	21	8
All Boys	12	2	3	7	6	17	7

Section D	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Talleres Cor.	12	8	1	3	22	13	17
FC Oeste	12	6	4	2	22	14	16
Newell's O B	12	6	3	3	20	13	15
Argentinos Jnrs.	12	6	1	5	20	15	13
Cent. Norte Salta	12	4	5	3	13	14	13
Huracan Com. R.	12	5	2	5	10	10	12
Colon S. Fe	12	3	4	5	10	16	10
San Lorenzo BA	12	2	4	6	14	20	8
San Lor. M. d P.	12	1	3	8	17	30	5

BRAZIL: National Championship
(Semi-final groups — top 2 of each go into final)

Group Q	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Inter. P. Alegre	3	2	0	1	9	3	6
Ponte Preta	2	2	0	0	2	0	4
Coritiba	3	2	0	1	2	1	4
Palmeiras	3	1	2	0	5	4	4
Santa Cruz	3	1	1	1	6	9	3
Corintians	3	0	2	1	0	1	2
Bota. (S. Paulo)	3	1	0	2	2	5	2
Portuguesa	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Caxias	2	0	0	2	1	3	0

Group R	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Atletico (Horiz.)	3	2	0	1	7	3	6
Fluminense	3	3	0	0	4	1	6
Flamengo	3	1	1	1	3	3	3
Vasco da Gama	3	1	1	1	2	2	3
Bahia	3	1	1	1	2	3	3
Nautico	2	0	2	0	2	2	2
Guarani	2	0	2	0	2	2	2
Gremio	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
C. R. Brasil	3	0	0	3	1	6	0

(Teams winning by more than two goal margins awarded extra point)

URUGUAY: Major League
(First round — top 8 continue playing second round)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nacional	11	9	2	0	24	4	20
Peñarol	11	5	6	0	23	12	16
Danubio	11	6	2	3	21	16	14
Defensor	11	5	2	4	14	12	12
Liverpool	11	3	5	3	17	15	11
Wanderers	11	3	5	3	19	14	11
Sudamerica	11	4	2	5	20	22	10
Fenix (x)	11	4	1	6	15	20	9
Rentistas (x)	11	4	1	6	19	27	9
Huracan Buceo	11	2	3	6	12	22	7
River Plate	11	1	5	5	15	21	7
Cerro	11	1	4	6	11	25	6

(x) Fenix won play-off for 8th place.

Second round standings (5 matches to go): 1. Nacional 24 pts; 2. Peñarol 19; 3. Danubio & Wanderers 15; 5. Defensor 14; 6. Sudamerica 12; 7. Liverpool 11; 8. Fenix 9.

PERU: First Division
(7 matches to go)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sport Boys	23	10	11	2	36	24	31
Juan Aurich	23	10	10	3	27	20	30
Union Huaral	23	11	7	5	30	17	29
Universitario	23	11	6	6	30	24	28
Alianza Lima	23	7	11	5	34	23	25
L. de Huanuco	23	8	9	6	28	22	25
Melgar	23	9	7	7	37	34	25
Sporting Crist.	23	7	10	6	20	17	24
Deportivo Junin	23	8	6	9	26	25	22
Alfonso Ugarte	23	8	4	11	36	31	20
Cienciano	23	5	10	8	26	27	20
Atletico Chalaco	23	5	10	8	32	42	20
Col. Nac. Iquitos	23	5	9	9	18	27	19
Dep. Municipal	23	4	10	9	26	35	18
Defensor Lima	23	6	6	11	33	49	18
Carlos M.	23	7	0	16	28	48	14

EQUADOR: "Finalizacion" Championship
(Top three qualify for championship final round)

Final standings (18 games): 1. Nacional Quito 23 pts; 2. Liga Deportiva Universitaria Quito 21; 3. Deportivo Cuenca 20; 4. Emelec Guayaquil & Aucas Quito 19; 6. Barcelona Guayaquil 18; 7. Carmen Mora (Machala) 17; 8. Universidad Catolica Quito & Deportivo Quito 16; 10. Audaz Octubrino Machala.

CHILE: First Division
(One match to go)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Everton (Viña)	33	22	8	3	75	42	52
Union Española	33	20	11	2	70	29	51
Colo Colo	33	16	12	5	57	34	44
Univ. de Chile	33	16	11	6	67	39	43
Palestino	33	15	10	8	64	52	40
Green Cross	33	16	8	9	57	36	40
Univ. Catolica	33	13	10	10	47	32	36
Wanderers	33	11	10	12	51	58	32
Concepcion	33	12	7	14	60	58	31
Ovalle	33	9	12	12	46	43	30
Antofagasta	33	11	6	16	49	66	28
Huachipato	33	10	6	17	48	61	26
Aviacion	33	8	10	15	59	64	26
Santiago Morn.	33	10	6	17	39	56	26
Lota Schwager	33	6	13	14	45	67	25
Naval	33	7	8	18	47	52	22
La Serena	33	6	5	22	42	68	17

VENEZUELA
(Final round)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portuguesa	2	2	0	0	5	1	4
Galicia	2	1	0	1	2	4	2
Estudiantes	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Portugues	2	0	1	1	2	3	1

COLUMBIA
"Finalizacion" Championship
(Final Standings (top 2 of section A and 1st of Section B qualify for final round)

Section A	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dep. Cali	21	11	4	6	43	35	26
Nacional Med.	21	10	6	4	38	18	26
Millionarios	21	8	10	3	40	29	26
Caldas	21	9	5	7	34	28	23
Indep. Santa Fe	21	8	5	8	24	26	21
Junior B.	21	6	8	7	27	28	20
Cucuta	21	4	7	10	23	37	15

Section B	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Quindio	21	7	11	3	28	22	25
Medellin	21	8	6	7	32	32	22
Bucamaranga	21	7	7	7	22	27	21
Union Mag.	21	4	12	5	23	24	20
America Cali	21	6	7	8	28	28	19
Pereira	21	5	9	7	26	33	19
Tolima	21	2	7	12	18	39	11

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bastia	16	10	3	3	40	21	23
Nantes	16	10	3	3	35	18	23
Lyon	16	8	5	3	30	18	21
Metz	16	8	3	5	24	20	19
Lens	16	6	6	4	33	30	18
Marseille	15	8	2	5	26	23	18
Nancy	15	6	4	5	32	24	16
Nice	16	7	2	7	23	23	16
Reims	16	6	4	6	25	28	16
St-Germain	15	6	3	6	25	26	15
St-Etienne	15	4	6	5	18	15	14
Sochaux	15	6	2	7	21	24	14
Nimes	15	5	4	6	18	23	14
Valenciennes	16	5	4	7	23	24	14
Laval	16	6	2	8	20	27	14
Angers	16	5	4	7	21	29	14
Bordeaux	16	5	3	8	21	26	13
Troyes	16	5	3	8	15	23	13
Rennes	16	4	2	10	15	30	10
Lille	16	4	1	11	21	34	9

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Bruges	12	8	3	1	25	9	19
RWD Molenbeek	12	7	3	2	20	9	17
Kortrijk	12	6	3	3	17	15	15
Lierse SK	12	6	3	3	17	15	15
Antwerp	12	6	3	3	15	14	15
Anderlecht	12	5	5	2	27	15	15
Standard	12	5	5	2	14	9	15
Beerschot	12	6	2	4	27	20	14
CS Bruges	12	5	4	3	18	19	14
Lokeren	12	4	4	4	14	12	12
Beringen	12	4	2	6	18	17	10
Winterslag	12	4	2	6	14	14	10
Beveren-Waas	12	2	6	4	10	17	10
SC Charleroi	12	3	3	6	9	15	9
Waregem	12	3	1	8	14	22	7
Liege	12	2	3	7	11	23	7
Oostende	12	2	2	8	17	28	6
Mechelen	12	1	4	7	10	23	6

WEST GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bor. M'gladbach	15	11	3	1	36	12	25
Bayern	15	9	4	2	50	33	22
E. Braunschweig	15	7	7	1	26	17	21
Hertha BSC	15	8	4	3	29	16	20
Cologne	15	9	1	5	32	21	19
MSV Duisburg	15	5	7	3	29	20	17
Schalke 04	15	8	1	6	33	28	17
Bor. Dortmund	15	6	3	6	30	26	15
VfL Bochum	15	6	3	6	23	25	15
Hamburger SV	15	5	5	5	22	24	15
Fort. Dusseldorf	14	6	1	7	20	24	13
Werder Bremen	15	4	5	6	25	26	13
Karlsruher SC	15	3	6	6	19	26	12
E. Frankfurt	15	5	1	9	32	35	11
Kaiserslautern	14	4	2	8	16	18	10
TB Berlin	15	3	4	8	22	48	10
Saarbrücken	15	2	4	9	11	25	8
Rot-Weiss Essen	15	1	3	11	17	48	5

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
SSW Innsbruck	18	10	6	2	29	12	26
Austria/WAC	18	10	3	5	34	25	23
Rapid	18	8	6	4	30	22	22
VOeEST Linz	18	6	6	6	25	22	18
Admira/Wacker	18	6	6	6	24	25	18
Linzer ASK	18	6	4	8	29	30	16
Sturm Graz	18	6	4	8	22	30	16
Grazer AK	18	5	5	8	18	29	15
Vienna	18	3	8	7	12	18	14
Austria Salzburg	18	5	2	11	18	28	12

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Feyenoord	15	11	3	1	42	15	25
Ajax Amsterdam	15	11	2	2	31	10	24
Utrecht	15	9	2	4	29	23	20
Roda JC	15	7	5	3	24	12	19
Haarlem	15	7	5	3	22	18	19
AZ'67 Alkmaar	15	7	4	4	38	19	18
PSV Eindhoven	15	7	4	4	29	17	18
Sparta Rotterdam	15	6	5	4	25	24	17
NAC Breda	15	6	4	5	26	27	16
Den Haag	15	4	5	6	26	23	12
GAE Deventer	15	3	6	6	19	35	12
Twente Enschede	15	4	3	8	18	21	11
VVV Venlo	15	4	3	8	15	28	11
EEV Eindhoven	15	3	5	7	14	35	11
NEC Nijmegen	15	2	6	7	22	24	10
Telstar Velsen	15	3	3	9	17	32	9
De Graafschap	15	3	3	9	15	32	9
Amsterdam	15	1	6	8	17	34	8

SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Servette	14	8	5	1	38	13	21
Young Boys	14	7	6	1	34	17	20
Basel	13	8	3	2	30	17	19
Zurich	14	7	5	2	29	11	19
Lausanne	14	5	5	4	24	15	15
Grasshoppers	14	4	6	4	28	21	14
Neuch. Xamax	14	4	6	4	20	24	14
Sion	14	3	6	5	15	18	12
St. Gallen	14	4	4	6	16	23	12
Chênois	14	3	5	6	20	31	11
Winterthur	14	1	3	10	13	37	5
Bellinzona	13	1	2	12	8	48	4

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dundee United	12	9	1	2	28	16	19
Celtic	12	7	3	2	26	13	17
Aberdeen	12	7	3	2	21	11	17
Rangers	12	4	5	3	17	13	13
Motherwell	12	5	3	4	22	20	13
Hibernian	13	1	8	4	12	16	10
Hearts	12	1	7	4	18	44	9
Partick Thistle	11	3	3	5	11	18	9
Ayr United	13	3	3	7	18	32	9
Kilmarnock	13	1	4	8	17	29	6

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sporting	9	8	1	0	23	6	17
Benfica	9	5	2	2	13	11	12
Estoril	9	3	5	1	11	7	11
Academico	9	5	1	3	13	10	11
Porto	9	4	2	3	23	13	10
Braga	9	3	4	2	14	13	10
Varzim	9	4	2	3	18	19	10
Vit. Setubal	8	4	1	3	15	11	9
Boavista Porto	9	4	1	4	16	14	9
Belenenses	9	2	4	3	9	10	8
Beira-Mar	8	2	3	3	13	16	7
Leixoes	9	0	7	2	4	6	7
Vit. Guimaraes	9	3	1	5	11	15	7
Portimonense	9	2	1	6	6	14	5
Montijo	9	1	3	5	7	17	5
Atletico	9	1	2	6	5	19	4

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	7	7	0	0	14	5	14
Torino	7	6	1	0	13	3	13
Lazio	7	4	2	1	9	4	10
Napoli	7	3	3	1	13	8	9
Perugia	7	3	1	3	8	7	7
Roma	7	2	3	2	8	7	7
Fiorentina	7	2	3	2	6	6	7
Inter	7	2	3	2	5	5	7
Milan	7	1	4	2	8	10	6
Verona	7	2	2	3	8	10	6
Bologna	7	1	4	2	7	12	6
Foggia	7	1	3	3	5	7	5
Catanzaro	7	1	3	3	5	9	5
Sampdoria	7	1	3	3	4	8	5
Genoa	7	0	3	4	7	11	3
Cesena	7	0	2	5	3	11	2

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	12	7	2	3	26	10	16
Atletico Madrid	12	7	2	3	19	12	16
Valencia	12	6	3	3	25	19	15
E. Barcelona	12	6	3	3	23	21	15
Real Madrid	12	6	2	4	24	19	14
Real Sociedad	12	4	5	3	18	15	13
Sevilla	12	4	5	3	11	13	13
Athletic Bilbao	12	4	4	4	18	18	12
Racing Santander	12	5	2	5	16	20	12
Las Palmas	12	4	3	5	14	16	11
Celta Vigo	12	4	3	5	9	11	11
Hercules Alicante	12	3	5	4	7	10	11
Real Betis Sevilla	12	4	2	6	17	19	10
Salamanca	12	4	2	6	11	14	10
Elche	12	3	4	5	15	19	10
Malaga	12	3	4	5	8	14	10
Real Zaragoza	12	3	3	6	16	20	9
Burgos	12	2	4	6	13	20	8

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	16	11	3	2	28	11	25
Ipswich	15	9	4	2	31	15	22
Newcastle	16	8	6	2	26	15	22
Aston Villa	16	8	3	5	31	20	19
Manchester City	15	6	7	2	18	11	19
Leicester	17	4	10	3	18	19	18
Arsenal	15	7	3	5	26	23	17
Leeds	16	5	7	4	22	20	17
West Bromwich	16	6	4	6	23	21	16
Everton	16	6	4	6	25	26	16
Stoke	16	6	4	6	12	16	16
Coventry	15	5	5	5	19	18	15
Birmingham	16	6	3	7	20	20	15
Middlesbrough	15	6	3	6	9	15	15
Manchester Utd	15	4	6	5	23	24	14
Queen's PR	16	5	4	7	20	23	14
Norwich	17	4	5	8	16	25	13
Derby	14	3	6	5	19	20	12
Bristol City	16	4	4	8	15	19	12
Tottenham	16	4	3	9	20	34	11
Sunderland	16	2	5	9	13	25	9
West Ham	16	3	3	10	17	31	9

USSR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Torpedo Moscow	15	9	2	4	20	9	20
Dynamo Kiev	15	6	6	3	22	16	18
Dynamo Tbilisi	15	6	5	4	16	12	17
Karpaty Lvov	15	6	5	4	22	19	17
Zenit Leningrad	15	6	4	5	22	16	16
Dynamo Moscow	15	7	2	6	15	13	16
CSKA Moscow	15	5	5	5	21	16	15
Lokomotiv Moscow	15	6	3	6	13	13	15
Tschernomorez Od.	15	7	1	7	14	20	15
Schachtjor Donezk	15	5	4	6	12	10	14
Krilija Kuybyschev	15	5	4	6	12	15	14
S. Voroschilovgrad	15	6	2	7	12	17	14
Dnjepr Dnjepropetr.	15	6	2	7	12	17	14
Ararat Erevan	15	4	6	5	14	20	14
Spartak Moscow	15	5	3	7	15	18	13
Dynamo Minsk	15	2	4	9	10	21	8

MORE NEXT MONTH

Roff of Bayern Munich.

ITALY v ENGLAND

World SOCCER

SABELLA (River Plate) and MOUZO (Boca Juniors)